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Exploring the intimate experiences of young people aged 11-14 through creative filmmaking.

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Abstract

Young people in Australia and across the world are increasingly exploring their intimate and sexual lives through digital environments. Scholars exploring the practices of sexting or young people's use of pornography have identified that moral and media panics focus mainly on the lives of young white women. These popular discourses frame young people through a notion of the innocent child protected from the risk and harms of intimacy. Although scholars from sociology, education, media and cultural studies continue to research young people's intimate digital practices, there is limited understanding of how these practices affect young people's non-sexual experiences of intimacy. In addition, there is limited understanding of the intimate lives of young people under the age of 15 and young men in particular.

To address this situation, a self-directed creative filmmaking method generated data that built new understandings of the intimate and digital lives of young people aged 11-14. Using a research process inspired by after queer theory, short-term ethnography and visual research methods, seven young women and three young men recorded their lived experiences of intimacy through self-directed creative filmmaking. These 10 participants used every day digital devices to discuss and describe their lived experiences of intimacy across 13 films. Through a discussion of data exploring locations of intimacy, behavioural practices of intimacy and emotions and intimacy, I explore the rich and complex intimate lives of 10 young people aged 11-14. Data indicate that most of the participants used digital spaces as metaphorical vehicles to explore intimacy during a period framed through normative notions of childhood innocence and managed intimate and sexual delay.

These narratives of intimacy indicated that participants of all genders used digital intimate public spaces to explore and experience emotions and intimacy in ways that were not occurring "in

person”. The emotions of intimacy were associated with intense, challenging or troubling feelings that stuck to participants’ experiences. Data highlight ways that five participants who identified as young women aged 11-14, used social media platforms to explore intimate experiences, and provided multiple examples of the complex and challenging intimate lives of three participants who identified as young men. Detailed narratives from these three participants illustrate they freely expressed emotions and explored their experiences of intimacy thus challenging the normative notion of the emotionally underdeveloped male (Holford, 2019). Digital platforms supported all participants, who identified as male, to explore new and emerging forms of masculinity and intimacy. The study concludes that a creative filmmaking method offers new ways to generate knowledge and understanding about young people’s lived experience of intimacy.

Declaration

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any university or equivalent institution and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, this thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person, except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

Signature:

Linette Rae Etheredge

Date: February 2020

Publications during enrolment

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From little things, big things grow. The first seeds of this study happened by chance at my local high school. After a speaking event, I had a powerful conversation with Dr Maria Gindidis about learning through filmmaking. When I talked about my idea of working with young people and getting them to make short films, she showed interest, enthusiasm and encouragement. It is from this seed that my research project emerged and for her encouragement of a pure stranger, I am eternally grateful.

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To queer is to distance oneself from norms, and to embrace that distance. [...] Queer marks an opportunity for reinterpretation. In this sense, queer is not an identity, a thing, or an entity but an *activity*. Queer names a practice, an approach, a way of relating. While queer offers elasticity, it always hinges on bodies, pleasures, relations, or desires at cross-purposes with heteronormativity. [...] A crucial lesson of queer is that thinking – which might seem to be disembodied – is inherently a bodily practice. Insofar as queer is a mode of thinking, it is a mode of thinking sideways, of turning around a question in unexpected ways. When we reflect on that sideways thinking, we have theory (McCallum & Bradway, 2019, p. 3).

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Glossary of Terms

Child queered by innocence (Stockton, 2009)	The child queered by innocence is the normative child framed through a notion that s/he does not have an intimate or sexual life. This framing makes children queer to adults.
Connective and disconnective practices: (Light, 2014; Light & Cassidy, 2014)	A range of practices through which individuals made and break connections within digital environments.
D/art/aphacts (Renold, 2018)	A term used by Renold to describe data generated through participatory creative practices.
Department of Education and Training (DET)	Victorian government department responsible for public schools.
Digital intimate publics (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018).	A digital intimate public space is generated when marginalised people form collectives to share their intimate lives online.
Digital trace	The digital record of a digital interaction, visual image or video.
Face to Face (FTF)	Face to Face (FTF) refers to encounters “in person” in contrast to through digital connection.
Growing sideways (Stockton, 2009)	Growing in a nonlinear manner against normative and heteronormative models of development and upward growth.
Instances (Denzin, 2017)	A data instance can be compared to a data extract. However, the term instance recognises that the

	moment captured in the data is unique and cannot be generalised to other people, times or places.
Instant Messaging Service (IMS)	Instant Messaging Service.
Intimate publics (Berlant, 2008)	A collective of people who share their lives and world views through expression in public media spaces.
Lurk/Lurking (Byron & Albury, 2018)	To look at others through scanning profiles or images online.
Polymedia (Madianou & Miller, 2013).	The idea that people use media and technology across multiple platforms to facilitate social and emotional attachments.
Queer child (Stockton, 2009)	All children are understood as queer or strange when compared to adults.
Sexting (Dobson, 2018)	The practice of sending sexualised images via digital means.
Social Media Platforms (SMP)	The generic name for a range of online platforms where people share information and engage in connectivity.
Social Networking Sites (SNS) (Light, 2014)	Social Networking Sites refer to the digital applications where connections occur. These include Facebook, Instagram etc.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Current research and popular media commentary about the intimate life of young people, indicate they are increasingly exploring intimacy across a range of digital environments (Barker, Gill, & Harvey, 2018; Fisher et al., 2019; Fyfe, 2019; Madianou & Miller, 2013). Although a number of quantitative studies have provided recent data on young people's digital intimate practices (Fisher et al., 2019; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019; Parker, 2014) there is limited understanding of how these practices affect young people's lived experiences of intimacy. The literature considering how young people use digital environments to explore their intimate lives has focused on sexting (Albury, 2015; Dobson, 2018), mental health issues (Hendry, 2016), pornography (Albury, 2014; Coy & Horvath, 2019), bullying, and gendered relations (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015a, 2015b). Although there have been developments in this area of study, scant research has explored the intimate and networked lives of young people under the age of 15. Some retrospective details from large online surveys (Parker, 2014; Fisher et al., 2019) suggest that many young people under 15 years of age are exploring their intimate and sexual lives online with little or no guidance. Although research indicates that digital environments are increasingly important to young people, limited understanding of what young people under the age of 15 think and feel about their intimate experiences has been forthcoming (Igras, Macieira, Murphy, & Lundgren, 2014; Naezer, 2018).

In the era of digital technology and mobile data, a range of digital environments provide young people with autonomous and private spaces to explore and validate their intimate and sexual lives (Allen, 2006; Hare, Gahagan, Jackson, & Steenbeck, 2015; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019). As Allen (2006) argued over a decade ago, digital environments provide young people with an alternative and erotic view of human sexual behaviour that challenges the largely

negative view discussed in much sexuality education (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; McKee, 2012; Mitchell, Patrick, Heywood, Blackman, & Pitts, 2014). Researchers found that the pleasures of intimate and sexual relationships were more commonly highlighted in digital environments, while the potential harms were downplayed (Allen, 2006; Hare et al., 2015; Spisák, 2016, 2017). Although many studies have focused on the sexual lives or sexual education of young people, there is limited research that investigates a broader notion of their intimate lives (Dobson, 2018; Hart, 2018). The continued focus on sexuality directs enquiries toward problems, and neglects the broader aspects of intimacy influencing young people's lives. The study outlined in this thesis, seeks to address this gap to build a more complex understanding of the intimate experiences of young people aged 11-14 who are exploring their intimate lives across a range of digital environments and in person.

1.2 The Problem

Research is needed to understand how young people under the age of 15 experience intimacy and how these experiences influence young people's perception of intimacy. Further research, that enquires into the lived experiences of young people exploring and developing their intimate lives through Social Networking Sites (SNS), Social Media Platforms (SMP) and Face to Face (FTF) encounters, could help scholars and educators to understand the reality and complexity of the intimate lives of young people under 15 years of age.

For many researchers one single event sparks interest in a problem that propels them to research and deeply understand the issue in focus (Gilbert, 2014). The spark that began this research journey offers an insight into how the digital intimate experiences of several young men under the age of 15, influenced their understanding of intimacy. The story of this spark also serves as an entrée to the data collected in this study that demonstrates the multiple ways that young people experienced intimacy in digital environments. The understandings gained through

an exploration of the experiences documented in the data, offer researchers, educators and parents alike, new knowledge to support young people to develop healthy intimate relationships.

The single moment that sparked this research journey, occurred when I was teaching a group of Year 7 students at a private co-educational school. I was working as a casual relief teacher when I overheard a young man say something to his friends that shocked and saddened me. The statement I heard him say to his friends was, “Oh well, don’t worry, if she won’t do it we’ll just rape her then.” The young man was telling his friends what they would do if the girl they were talking about would not have sex with him.

The fact that a young man under the age of 15 said this deeply shocked me. This comment was unacceptable to me and to others in the classroom who overheard it. It contravened the school values, the values of the broader community and the laws of this country. Once I had heard the comment, I talked to the young men to understand how they had arrived at such a distorted understanding of intimacy and sexuality. In that moment of classroom practice, I decided to delay dealing with the incident until after the class had finished. My decision to create time and space between the incident and the necessary discussion with the young men facilitated a collaborative and participatory discussion. The conversation offered an unexpected and rich learning experience for me as the teacher and I trust for the students involved.

After the class ended, I talked with the young men outside the normal curriculum structure and the usual disciplinary environment. What transpired during that discussion gave me an understanding of the many questions that these young men had about intimacy and sexuality. My learnings from the conversation aroused compassion for their situation and propelled me to begin the process of finding out what young people might really need to know to develop lawful and equitable understandings of intimacy. What was obvious, from this pivotal classroom incident, was that these young men had limited knowledge and few skills to consider or question the ideas about intimacy and sexuality they had gathered from their sex education via free online

pornography (Albury, 2014). This conversation provided an insight into the intimate lives of young people aged 11-14 that I had not expected. The new perspective I gained from this encounter fuelled my curiosity and encouraged me to develop a research proposal designed to understand how young people aged 11-14 might experience intimacy through their explorations in digital environments. As I began to think deeply about this issue, I wondered whom young people might be talking to about their experiences of intimacy and sexuality. As I pondered this question, it occurred to me that it was possible that young people aged 11-14 did not talk about their experiences of intimacy or sexuality to each other or adults.

1.3 Overview of the Study

The research outlined in this thesis records the intimate experiences, thoughts and feelings of 10 Year 7 and Year 8 students. These stories and discussions relate specifically to the experiences of seven participants, self-identified as young women, and three participants, self-identified as young men, who reported exploring intimacy in both digital environments and FTF encounters. An after queer approach informed by Talburt and Rasmussen (2010), framed the design phase of the study influenced by the works of education and sexuality scholar Gilbert (2014) and queer literary studies scholar Stockton (2009, 2016). An after queer inspired subjunctive methodology (Talburt, 2010) enacted through a short-term ethnographic approach as described by Pink and Morgan (2013), informed the data generation methods. This approach did not seek truth in data nor did it aim to know exactly what would happen during the research process. Key data explored in this thesis originated from 13 short films generated using a creative film making method. Scholars employing visual and creative methods to work with young people in educational settings influenced the development of this participatory data generation method (Allen, 2009; Iverson & Renold, 2016; Renold, 2018).

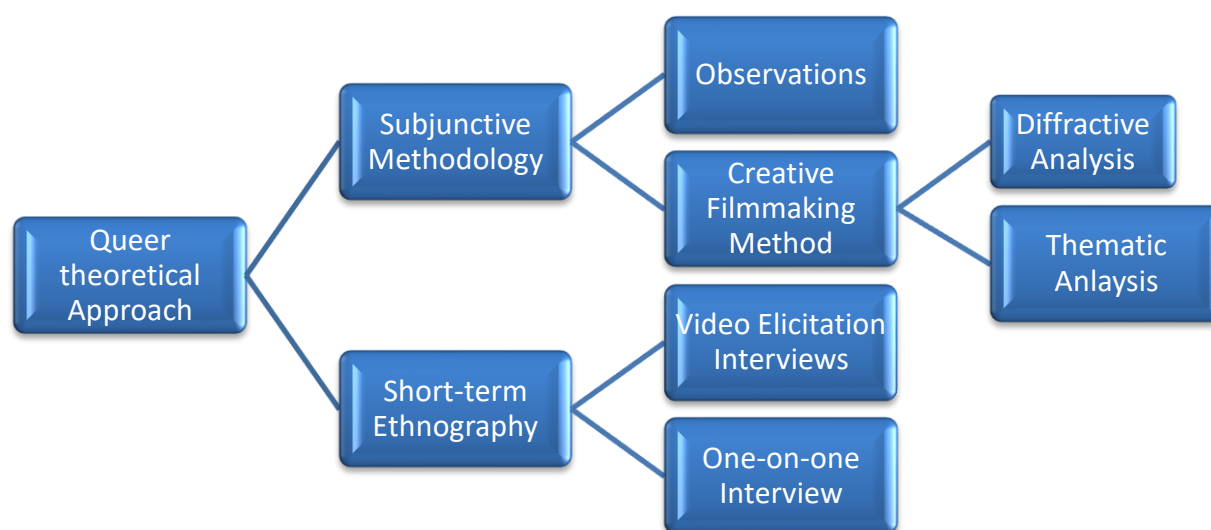


Figure 1. Research design

As illustrated in Figure 1, four data sets generated data from four methods that included observations, creative filmmaking, video elicitation interviews from student participants, and an individual one on one interview with the DET school health nurse. I initially analysed data from all data sets using a diffractive analysis (Barad, 2007; Taguchi & Palmer, 2013). I then undertook an additional thematic analysis of short films that identified three key themes across the data. These themes highlighted the significance of locations of intimacy, behavioural practices of intimacy, and emotions in participants' experiences of intimacy. These three themes directed the data analysed and presented across the data analysis chapters. Figure 1 represents the key aspects of the study design and illustrates the interconnected nature of the research process.

1.4 Research Rationale and Research Questions

Across the literature, the voices of young people aged 11-14 are largely absent from discussions about intimacy and sexuality (Igras et al., 2014; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019). This gap highlights that there is limited understanding of the ways that young people under the age of 15

experience intimacy. Through an exploration of three research questions, this study seeks to contribute new knowledge and understandings of the intimate lives of 10 young people aged 11-14 to address the gap. Due to the small number of participants, I have made no generalisations about the intimate experiences of young people. Instead, the analysis of data addressing the following research questions, offers transferable ideas to other researchers exploring the intimate lives of young people. The two primary questions consider the following,

- How are young people aged 11-14 experiencing intimacy through their explorations in digital environments?
- How do young people's digital practices influence their experience of intimacy?

The single secondary research question asks,

- How does a self-generated creative filmmaking method support young people aged 11-14, to explore their experiences of intimacy within an educational context?

1.5 Theoretical and Methodological Elements of the Study

There are five key conceptual and methodological elements to this study. The most significant are the theoretical elements informed by queer scholars working within educational environments to explore the intimate lives of young people (Allen, 2015; Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010).

These five elements afford a unique research and learning opportunity where 10 participants, who self-selected to engage in the research process, discussed and recorded their experiences of intimacy through a school based creative research process. The creative and self-directed filmmaking method used to generate data provided the participants with a queer inspired framing to explore their intimate lives, autonomy to explore the intimate experiences that were most important to them, and the time and space to examine, discuss and reassess their experiences of intimacy in a new way. Using an after queer theoretical approach, this study disrupted many commonly accepted ways of conceptualising and working with young people in

educational classrooms and educational research (Gilbert, 2014). Most importantly the study moved away from more common themes of queer research (Talbur & Rasmussen, 2010), to invite young people to participate as intimate and agentic subjects rather than young people labelled by gender or sexual preference. To that end, participants were not asked to nominate their gender nor were they recruited by gender or sexual preference. The majority of participants self-identified their gender as male or female through speech acts in the data collected on film. Throughout this study, there was no desire to recruit participants of any prescribed gender, sexual preference nor cultural group. These usual foci of intersectional disadvantage were not the scope of this study. Instead through the use of after queer theory and the concept of the queer child the study explored differing ways in which all children and young people are made queer when viewed in opposition to adults (Stockton, 2009).

The theoretical and methodological aspects of the study are summarised in five key elements.

1. Young people were conceptualised as agentic intimate and sexual subjects (Gilbert, 2014; Robinson & Davies, 2019; Stockton, 2009). As demonstrated in studies conducted by Allen (2015), Renold and Ringrose (2016) and Renold (2018), when framed as experts in their own lives, young people can actively engage in creative, participatory research methods in school-based settings to develop new knowledge and understandings. Across this thesis, I have used the term young people in preference to the terms child or children to acknowledge all participants' as agentic I engaged intimate subjects, and to disrupt the notion of innocence attached to the word child.

2. with after queer thinkers Talburt & Rasmussen, (2010) to conceptualise the focus of this study away from a narrow focus on sexuality toward a broader notion of intimacy conceptualised as both public and private acts of sharing the self (Berlant, 1998, 2008; Dobson, Carah, & Robards, 2018). In addition, the use of after queer theory, and the concept of the queer child framed expanded the analysis process to explore the many different and intersecting ways that young people are queered by the notion of childhood innocence beyond issues of gender, sexuality, race and class (Stockton, 2009).
3. Creativity was valued and utilised to produce data through the construction of self-generated films made using everyday digital devices (Allen, 2015b; Ivinson & Renold, 2016). The creative filmmaking method offered a way to facilitate a student led research process that acknowledged young people's creativity and capacity to record their intimate experiences using everyday digital devices.
4. Generous allocations of time and space facilitated a self-generated data production process where young people explored, discussed and recorded their lived experiences of intimacy without adult questioning (Allen, 2009; Ivinson & Renold, 2016; Renold, 2018).
5. Emotions are understood to stick to experiences that are recognised as intimate by the participants (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a). Through the process of experiencing the challenging emotions associated with intimacy, the young people in this study appear to have grown to the side of normative expectations of slow and gradual development that is characterised by childhood innocence (Stockton, 2009).

The broad principles of queer theory recognise and encourage fluidity, flexibility and change (Gilbert, 2014; Gowlett & Rasmussen, 2014; Heckert, 2010). This fluid and evolving

theory seeks to question and challenge normative understandings, and does not seek a fixed outcome from a research process. In this way, the use of after queer theory challenged common subjects of queer theory and troubled the usual process of focusing on issues of gender, sexuality and the intersecting disadvantages of race, colour and class.

In line with after queer theory, I engaged with a “subjunctive” (Talburt, 2010, p. 49) methodology. A subjunctive methodology (discussed in Chapter 4) works to recognise and accommodate the “unpredictability and creativity of identity and disorder” that Talburt (2010, p. 49) argued occurs when working with research participants. This methodology enacted through a short-term ethnographic approach (Pink & Morgan, 2013), anticipated that research processes would evolve and change through data production and analysis. During the design phase of the study, I hoped that the participants would share details of their intimate lives through their self-directed films. However, there was no certainty that the data produced through the creative filmmaking method would offer the rich insights into 10 young people’s intimate experiences that eventuated.

There is a long tradition of marginalised groups using the medium of film to tell their stories (Cumming, 2014). Through the genre of documentary films, filmmakers have offered complex and nuanced understanding of the worlds of marginalised people (Cumming, 2014; Etheredge, 2012; Wolfe, 2015). In this study, young people aged 11-14 were the filmmakers conceptualised as a marginalised group because of their status as non-adults and young people queered by innocence (Allen, 2011; Gilbert, 2007, 2014; Stockton, 2009). In this sense young people are “othered” by the intersectionality of their young age, opposition to adults and the presumption of sexual innocence. Thus, their status as being othered through multiple different forms of intersecting disadvantage makes them a marginalised group (Stockton, 2009; Gilbert, 2014; Jarkovská and Lamb, 2019). Recently, Jarkovská and Lamb (2019) argued that the normative framing of the innocent child positioned as “helpless, incompetent and completely

dependent on the will of adults” (p. 76) marginalises young people. The discourse of childhood innocence dominates conversations and curricula focusing on the intimate lives of young people, thus framing them as at risk and in need of protection from intimacy and sexuality itself (Gilbert, 2007, 2014). Across this study, the normative innocence framing, discussed by numerous scholars, (Gilbert, 2014; Robinson & Davies, 2019; Stockton, 2009) is problematised. Instead, participants are framed as agentic intimate and sexual subjects who are capable of documenting their experiences of intimacy through the production of self-generated films.

The creative practice of making documentary films is an artistic form of communication that has been used in the past to challenge and disrupt power relationships within Australian society (Cumming, 2014). Films made by politically motivated filmmakers often provide access into the lives of people whose experiences might otherwise remain hidden (Cumming, 2014). In Melbourne, Australia, there is a long history of filmmaking as an expression of art and a vehicle for independent “social critique” (Cumming, 2014, p. 34). Veteran filmmaker John Hughes emphasised the “political use of film” (Cumming, 2014, p. 34). In the past, members of The Melbourne Filmmakers’ co-op banded together to make films that “reflect the enthusiasm of a generation of intelligent, socially engaged young people to challenge established power structures, conventions and stereotypes in art, politics and the media” (Cumming, 2014, p. 34). As a documentary filmmaker and student of John Hughes, I know the power of making a film that challenged normative notions of people marginalised because of their sexual and gender diversity (Etheredge, 2012). My previous experience as a documentary filmmaker has therefore influenced this important theoretical and methodological element of the study.

As an educator and a documentary filmmaker, I am following in the tradition of facilitating political activism through film. During my years as a documentary filmmaker, I made a number of films that were highly political in their attempt to challenge established conventions about sexuality, gender, art forms, performance and the way relationships engage people in a

process of evolving as intimate and sexual subjects (Etheredge, 2012). As a secondary school teacher, I have also been interested in engagement, participation and empathic pedagogies that have creative intentions and exploratory ideals (Etheredge, 2003). As a mother of four teenagers, I am also personally interested in the way that young people, who are growing up watching films, making films and are always connected through digital technology, make sense of the intimacy they experience through their digital engagements.

Through these various influences, filmmaking has been included in the design of this study to facilitate political commentary from a group of young people rarely afforded an opportunity to document their lived experiences. The narratives conveyed across the 13 films collected as data from the 10 young participants, challenge the commonly held belief that young people are “unknowing and unable to advocate for themselves” (Jarkovská & Lamb, 2019, p. 78). Therefore, the analysis of data from the 13 short films challenges common discourse about the innocence of children. This queered perspective, supported by data created by 10 young people aged 11-14, demonstrates that young people are navigating rich and complex intimate lives. Data from these short films also challenge normative notions of young people because it demonstrates their capacity to explore, discuss and learn from their intimate experiences using a self-directed creative filmmaking process. The complex nature of the experiences conveyed across the data also demonstrate Gilbert’s (2014) argument that sexuality, and in this study intimacy, generates “conflict for the self” (p. xiii). The discussions in this thesis demonstrate that it is through these conflicts that experiences are recognised as intimate, and sideways growth occurs for the participants.

1.6 Positioning the Work in Educational Debates

Within school environments, sexualised communication among young people is often discouraged (Gilbert, 2014). Over a decade ago, Allen (2006) argued that the official and regulatory “culture of schools seeks to deny and contain pupils’ sexuality through a plethora of

disciplinary techniques” (p. 71). These techniques, fuelled by risk and harm minimisation discourse mean that a great deal of learning about sexuality or intimacy occurs in unstructured discussions outside formal classroom environments (Allen, 2015; Fisher et al., 2019; Igras et al., 2014). In many school environments, a negative, risk management focus still directs curriculum content (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Leahy, 2014). Many scholars including Allen (2006) have argued that the binary of risk and harm is a key reason why young people, and in particular young men, turn toward pornography and digital environments to validate their desire for intimate and sexual understanding (Spisák, 2016, 2017; Albury, 2014; Parker 2014). For many young people today, exploring intimacy online, watching pornography or sending and receiving sexualised messages is a convenient and autonomous way to explore and validate their natural and healthy interest in intimacy outside the control of parents or educators (Albury, 2015; Byron & Albury, 2018; Coy & Horvath, 2019).

However, for the young men in the classroom incident that sparked this research enquiry, knowledge of intimacy through their explorations of online pornography provided details of inequitable gender relations that dominated the cultural and sexual currency of their social group (Crabbe & Corlett, 2013). With little or no sexuality and relationships education addressing the existence or impact of pornography on young people’s understanding of intimate relationships (Crabbe, 2015; Ollis, 2016), it is little wonder that the young men involved in the classroom incident had an unhealthy perception of intimacy. This understanding highlights the disturbing fact that many young people have little or no opportunity to critically reflect, discuss or question the ideas and issues that are relevant to them as they explore their intimate lives in and through digital practices (Albury, 2014; Albury & Byron, 2016; Fisher et al., 2019).

Of particular note, research detailing the intimate experiences of young men under the age of 15 is limited. For this reason, I explore in depth data constructed by the three young men who participated in this study to challenge the normative discourse of “hard masculinity” (Naezer &

Ringrose, 2019, p. 422) common across the literature. These discussions offer new understandings that shift narrow and gendered perceptions to include a more considered understanding of the thoughts and experiences of young men. To date, many studies have focused on the experiences of young women (Barker et al., 2018; Handyside & Ringrose, 2017; Ivinson & Renold, 2016; Ringrose, Harvey, Gill, & Livingstone, 2013). Therefore, the aim of this study is to document the intimate experiences of a small number of Australian young people across genders to better understand how scholars and educators can support them to learn from their experiences of intimacy through engaging in self-directed, creative learning processes.

1.7 Thesis Outline and Conclusion

I explain the story of this research over nine chapters. This introductory chapter offered a brief outline of the problem and detailed the incident that sparked this research. It offered an overview of the study and outlined the research questions. In Chapter 2, I review the literature through an exploration of articles and theoretical discussion from the disciplines of sociology, media and cultural studies, and education. I consider this literature through four themes that include young people, intimacy, digital intimate practices and sexual learning in school. From this review, I establish a need for research that focuses on young people under 15 years of age, explores the intimate lives of young men, and considers notions of intimacy beyond sexual intimacy.

In Chapter 3, I document the theoretical approach through a discussion of after queer theory (Talburt, 2010; Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010). I discuss in detail Stockton's (2009, 2016) concept of the queer child growing sideways, my use of the emerging theory of digital intimate publics (Dobson et al., 2018), and Ahmed's (2004a, 2010a) concept of sticky emotions. In Chapter 4, I briefly explain a subjunctive methodology and outline how I applied ideas from a short-term ethnographic approach to support young people to create their own data at the research site. I discuss the four data generation methods of observation, creative filmmaking, video

elicitation interviews and an individual “one on one interview” (Creswell, 2014, p. 217). Through a detailed explanation of the creative filmmaking method, I illustrate how the young people who participated were able to record the experiences of intimacy that were of most importance to them. Finally, I explain why I analysed data through both a diffractive and thematic analysis process. In Chapter 5, I provide contextual profiles of student participants to build an understanding of the complex intimate lives of the 10 young people who participated in this study.

In Chapter 6, I offer an analysis of the films made by all 10 participants through a discussion of the locations where they explored intimacy. I highlight the way four participants, who self-identified as female, preferred to explore intimacy on Facebook while the three participants, who self-identified as male, explored intimacy through engaging on other platforms such as Kik. The discussions in Chapter 6 identify how digital environments offered young people the metaphorical vehicles to grow sideways during periods of what Stockton (2009) described as “managed delay” (p. 40). This sideways growth occurred through their engagement in “sideways relations” (Stockton, 2009, p. 52) outside adult controlled environments. In Chapter 7, I explore eight participants’ experiences of digital intimacy through an analysis of the behavioural practices of connecting, sharing and disconnecting. From these discussions, I conclude that sharing behaviours are the most significant behaviours generating emotions associated with experiences of intimacy.

In the final discussion of data in Chapter 8, I focus my analysis on the details of three participants’ narratives describing the emotions they associated with intimacy. I explore three data moments in detail to demonstrate how digital intimate public spaces afforded these three young people sites of emotional exploration in ways that “in person” contact did not. I offer a detailed exploration of the emotions of confusion, frustration, disappointment and anger. From these discussions, I argue that it is through challenging or troubling emotions that young people

explored intimacy and grew sideways (Stockton, 2009). Finally, in Chapter 9, I offer conclusions drawn from the study. Through an exploration of the way this study addressed three main gaps in the literature, I explain six new understandings that contribute knowledge about the intimate lives of young people under the age of 15. I also highlight how creative filmmaking can support young people to explore their intimate experiences in educational settings. To conclude, I offer recommendations for future research and list four limitations encountered during this study.

In this chapter, I have introduced the research problem and offered a context for how this study will contribute to scholarly discussions involving young people and their digital practices. I explained why filmmaking is an important aspect of this study and outlined the key theoretical and methodological elements that position the work within educational debates. In the next chapter, I review literature through a focus on young people, intimacy, digital intimate practices and sexual learning in school.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This literature review begins with a brief discussion of the theoretical framing that informed my reading. Then across four sections, I explore literature relating to young people, intimacy, digital intimate practices and sexual learning in schools. Under the theme of young people, I consider how the concepts of childhood innocence, age and gender affect representations of young people across the literature. In Section 2.4, I explore literature defining the concept of intimacy and digital intimacy. In Section 2.5, I consider literature discussing young people's social media practices, and multiple forms of digital self-representation. In Section, 2.6, I review a small selection of literature from scholars of sexuality working with young people in educational settings. I conclude this review with a brief discussion of the three key gaps identified and explain how this study contributes new understandings to scholarly discussions about the intimate lives of young people aged 11-14.

The literature included in this review is from articles, books and reports authored by scholars researching the intimate and sexual lives of young people. Initially, I searched library databases ERIC and A+ education and Google Scholar for literature using key words 'young people', 'intimacy', 'sexuality' and 'digital environments'. I then expanded my approach to read the work of scholars mentioned in articles whose ideas offered a new or different way of understanding young people's intimate and digital lives. Finally, some of the literature discussed in this review is from scholars I heard present at conferences I attended during my candidature. Through these search methods, literature from the fields of sexuality education, sociology, sexual health, and media and cultural studies offered multiple ways of theorising and researching with young people to explore their intimate digital practices.

2.2 Theoretical Framing

The theoretical perspectives informing this study emerged from critical feminist traditions (Berlant, 1998; Harrison & Ollis, 2015; Renold, 2006; Stockton, 2009). I engaged with the work of scholars of sexuality who theorised the intimate lives of young people through queer and feminist perspectives because they recognised the intimate and sexual subjectivity of young people (Gilbert, 2014; Quinlivan, 2018c; Stockton, 2009; Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010). Pallotta-Chiarolli and Pease (2013) argued that subjectivity is “primarily based on lived experience” (p. 26), and that notions of individual subjectivity are “central to political struggles against regimes of power” (p. 26). Their definition highlights that subjectivity is “performed or actively constructed” (Pallotta-Chiarolli & Pease, 2013, p. 29) as individuals practice being and becoming through engagement in the world. In this study, I engage with multiple queer concepts to illuminate the evolving and at times performative subjectivity of young people under 15 identified and discussed in the accounts of their lived experiences of intimacy.

Since the year 2000, many scholars of sexuality have developed feminist, post structural and queer theoretical approaches to engage young people in discussions of sexuality and identity within school environments and other locations (Allen, 2010; Gannon, 2013; Gilbert, 2007, 2014; Harrison & Ollis, 2015; Quinlivan, 2011; Renold, 2006; Stockton, 2009). For example, Harrison and Ollis (2015) employed feminist and post structural ideas to “make connections between the individual and the social” (p. 320). Like many other feminist scholars, they have focused on the themes of “difference particularly in relation to gender and sexuality, knowledge as a social construction, deconstructing binaries and foregrounding marginalised voices and identity as constantly shifting and negotiated” (Harrison & Ollis, 2015, p. 320). Using these feminist inspired ideas, the work of scholars such as Gilbert (2014), Ollis, Coll, and Harrison (2019), Allen (2011), and Gannon (2013) have demonstrated that young people are often a marginalised group protected from sexual knowledge deemed not yet “developmentally appropriate” (Gannon,

2013, p. 373). These scholars have employed feminist and queer approaches to work with young people or analyse texts designed for young people in ways that valued their lived experience, foregrounded their voice and most importantly, acknowledged their status as intimate and sexual subjects.

Across studies of sexuality, queer theorists have offered conceptualisations of young people that recognised sexual subjectivity as innate and evolving (Gilbert, 2014; Robinson, 2012; Stockton, 2009; Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010). Scholars, including Gilbert (2014), Stockton (2009) and Robinson and Davies (2019), challenged the normative view of children as sexually innocent and in danger of their own intimacy and sexuality. Using queer and psychoanalytic theories, Gilbert (2007, 2014) challenged the developmental psychology model of growing toward the “normative as the ideal” (Gilbert, 2007 p.50) and conceptualised young people as intimate and sexual subjects from birth. By challenging the normative view, these scholars trouble the notion of the innocent child at risk of harm from their sexuality or intimate explorations (Gilbert, 2007, 2014; Stockton, 2009). Queer scholars have exposed the multiple ways that framing children and young people as innocent resulted in problematising and deficit framing young people and their intimate and sexual explorations.

Engagement with feminist and queer concepts encourages new ways of thinking about how young people experience power and inequity in their everyday lives. Talburt and Rasmussen (2010) encouraged queer scholars to think beyond a focus on sex, gender and a focus on the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex and queer (LGBTIQ) people to explore other areas of inequality. Several notable examples of how scholars have used queer theory to explore ideas beyond sexuality and gender, include explorations of pedagogical approaches to sexuality and relationship education (Coll & Charlton, 2018; Enright, Coll, Ní Chróinín, & Fitzpatrick, 2017; Quinlivan, 2011), analysis of subject selection, future pathways and employment opportunities offered to young people in schools labelled as disadvantaged (Gowlett,

2014). Recently, the theoretical focus of several scholars of sexuality have progressed through queer inspired ideas (Allen, 2010; Quinlivan, 2011; Renold, 2002, 2006) to explore young people's lived experiences of sexuality using material and post human approaches (Allen, 2018a, 2018b; Iverson & Renold, 2016; Quinlivan, 2018d; Renold, 2018; Renold & Ringrose, 2016).

Material and post human approaches such as Barad's (2007) "theory of agential realism" (p. 132) have necessitated a philosophical reframing of research participants, research foci, data generation practices and approaches to analysis (Allen, 2018a; Iverson & Renold, 2016; Renold, 2018). These changes have also destabilised and challenged the anthropocentric hold that humanist ideas have had over education research involving young people, and instigated new approaches to gathering and analysing research data (Allen, 2013b, 2015b; Iverson & Renold, 2016; Renold, 2018; Renold & Ringrose, 2016). In addition, many of these scholars have highlighted the way material and more than human matter such as mobile phones, movement and nature, affected participants' intimate and sexual experiences and subjectivities (Allen, 2013b; Iverson & Renold, 2018). These theoretical developments offer new insights into the way young people explore and experience their intimate lives. Drawing inspiration and ideas from these scholars, I explored the intimate and digital lives of young people aged 11-14 as agentic intimate and sexual subjects who are often marginalised or problematised through the framing of childhood innocence (Jarkovská & Lamb, 2019; Stockton, 2009).

In Section 2.2, I briefly outlined literature exploring the theoretical focus of scholars working to understand the intimate and sexual lives of young people from feminist, queer and material theoretical perspectives. The work of these scholars highlights new ways to theorise the intimate lives of young people as affected by material matter and socially constructed as other from adults. Next, I consider literature exploring the concepts of childhood innocence, age and gender to understand how scholars have framed discussions about the intimate lives of young people.

2.3 Young People

Through an exploration of the literature exploring the concept of childhood innocence, I highlight how the notion of innocence problematises the intimate lives of young people. The review of literature in Section 2.3.2 considers the lack of clarity about the age of participants described as young people across studies, and recognises the need for research to explore the intimate lives of young people under 15 years of age. This discussion also identified debates about the gendered nature of research associated with young people, intimacy, sexuality and digital practices.

2.3.1 Childhood innocence. The debates around childhood innocence are complex and nuanced. Lamb, White, and Plocha (2019) point out that popular debates combine the notion of childhood innocence with the idea that children are “not sexual” (p. 17). Through the popular misconception of childhood sexual innocence, Lamb et al. (2019) argued that the feelings, emotions and desires associated with sexuality are usually only attributed to adults and rarely recognised in children or young people. Gilbert (2007) argued that through a normative developmental framing of childhood innocence, adulthood is the desired target. The target of adulthood thus places those who have not yet reached this measure in deficit, framing such individuals as not fully developed or, worse still, as “not yet fully human” (p.50). Similarly, Stockton (2009) challenged normative notions of the intimate and sexual development of young people through an exploration of their behaviour portrayed in popular culture. From a literary studies perspective she developed the concept of the queer child growing sideways to demonstrate how children and young people are “queered” (Stockton, 2009, p. 30) or made strange through their framing as innocent in comparison to adults.

Stockton (2009) problematised the notion of childhood itself when she argued, “we should start again, with the problem of the child as a general idea. The child is precisely who we are not and, in fact, never were” (p. 5). Stockton’s (2009) concept of the queer child growing

sideways offers an alternative to a developmental framing of children and young people marked by “vertical movement upward” (p. 4). Delay is central to developmental notions of growth. However, Stockton (2009) argued that inherent within developmental notions of delay is a paradox that positions children as “more vulnerable” whilst at the same time they are constructed as “more problematic” (p. 37). Stockton (2009) theorised an alternative framing of growth through delay that highlighted how young people depicted in popular fiction grow to the side of normative expectations of linear upward growth. In the discussion of theory in Chapter 3, I explain how I have worked with the concept of the queer child growing sideways to understand the multiple ways that participants in this study grew to the side of normative expectations of growth framed through delay and the deficit of risk and harm (Stockton, 2009).

The concept of childhood innocence fuels the idea of moral panic and the risk discourse that surround the intimate lives of young people (Jarkovská & Lamb, 2019; Robinson & Davies, 2019). Literature highlighted that young people are the focus of moral panics that emerged as media outlets and political and social institutions struggled to control the way young people explored and expressed intimacy through technology (Jarkovská & Lamb, 2019; Stark, 2014). Moral panic positions children as overtly vulnerable, in danger of corruption and in need of protection. Jarkovská and Lamb (2019) argued that moral panic and child protection concerns are useful political tools as various “institutions and public policymakers” (p. 78) struggle to retain power. In this sense, their arguments suggest that power and control of young people are enacted through the discourse of childhood innocence.

Adult perceptions of young people’s needs are often complicated and potentially, politically motivated (Buckingham & Chronaki, 2014; Jarkovská & Lamb, 2019; Stark, 2014). Moral and media panics combined with a normative desire for childhood intimate and sexual delay, demonstrate how the concept of childhood innocence permeates and distorts discussion about young people’s intimate and digital lives. On the other side of the childhood innocence

debate, a body of scholarship recognised young people's intimate and sexual subjectivity and the important role digital environments play. For example, scholars from media and cultural studies have explored the potential educative value of pornography and a range of other media practices (Albury, 2014; Byron & Albury, 2018; McKee, 2010, 2012). The debates about young people's intimate and digital explorations are important because they demonstrate the distance between adult views of what young people should learn and young people's desire to explore their intimate lives through whatever means are available to them.

Through the notion of childhood innocence, the intimate and sexual needs of young people are often made invisible or ignored by adults. On the issue of what young people need or want to learn about their intimate and sexual lives, Kang and Rosenthal (2014) argued from a sexual health perspective that "the adolescent sexual health issues that concern adults are not the same as those that concern young people themselves, nor are they contextualised in the same way" (p. 231). What is taught to young people and what young people want to know, Robinson and Davies (2019) recently pointed out often differs significantly. They argued that young people's knowledge gap when it comes to sexuality "is most often pieced together from bits of information they are given by parents, siblings, peers, the media and watching animals' behaviors" (Robinson & Davies, 2019, p. 68). Stockton (2009) recognised the important role that animals played in the intimate lives of young people portrayed in popular fiction. She argued "animal/child affection" gives young people control of movement and their intimate "motions inside their delay" (Stockton, 2009, p. 90). The debates about the unmet needs of young people have been occurring at the same time as scholars of Facebook and other social media platforms have acknowledged the "ubiquitous and, arguably compulsory" (Hodkinson, 2017, p. 272) nature of participating and sharing online as evidence that young people are "growing up" online (Lincoln & Robards, 2016, p. 927).

Similarly, Hasinoff (2012) identified the gap between adult and young people's thinking when she theorised sexting as media production. She argued that there is a "problematic disconnect" (Hasinoff, 2012, p. 450) between young people's intimate mobile practices and the way adults criminalise these practices through legislation. In an Australian context, Albury (2013) and Dobson and Ringrose (2015) noted that, education dominated by gendered social moralising and legal concerns limit the possibilities of discussing and critiquing gendered behaviours and the recognition of young people's evolving ethical practices. These discussions highlight the disconnect between adult perceptions of young people's intimate practices, young people's lived experiences of these practices, and the relevance of education curricula. Therefore, in order to provide young people with an education about intimacy, sexuality and relationships that meets their needs, a more nuanced understanding of young people's intimate experiences is necessary.

The study outlined in this thesis provides evidence of the everyday issues that young people want to discuss as they explore their intimate lives in a self-directed manner. In the next section, I review literature that illuminates why clarity regarding the commonly used term *young people* is necessary to generate age specific understandings of the intimate lives of research participants. Through this discussion, I provide a rationale for why young people aged 11-14 are the focus of this study.

2.3.2 Age and gender. Across the literature, the age of participants referred to as *young people* varies significantly. In an Australian context, the Australian Institute of Health identified individuals "aged 12-24" (Kang & Rosenthal, 2014, p. 221) as young people. More recently, Coy and Horvath (2019) highlighted the difficulty of comparing studies and drawing conclusions about young people's use of online sexual material because "definitions of pornography (and young people) vary" (p. 466). Furthermore, the various meanings of the terms used to describe young people complicate understandings of their intimate lives. Some scholars use the phrase

children (Gilbert, 2014; Stockton, 2009), others very young adolescents (Igras, Macieira, Murphy, & Lundgren, 2014; Kang & Rosenthal, 2014), some tweens (Jackson & Goddard, 2015; Renold & Ringrose, 2008) while others write about young people (Albury, 2013; Allen, 2013b; Hart, 2018; Quinlivan, 2011) to describe research participants. The lack of clarity associated with the age of participants across research literature has led to a confusing array of labels used to describe individuals aged anywhere between 10 and 27 years. When seeking to understand the behaviours and motivations of particular groups of young people clarity about the age of participants is necessary to consider how experiences, understandings and contextual factors differ for differing age groups. At present, the broad use of the term young people distorts individual realities and the differing needs of young people across this large age range are submerged, overlooked or assumed to be similar. This is problematic because the behaviours of different aged young people can vary significantly. Regardless of the variation in terminology or lack of clarity about the age of research participants described as young people, much literature discussing their intimate lives focuses on individuals over the age of 15 (Allen, 2013b; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Fisher et al., 2019; Hart, 2018).

The absence of literature exploring the intimate and sexual lives of young people under 15 is noteworthy because many scholars have identified that young people are now reaching puberty at an earlier age. Hird and Jackson (2001) argued over a decade ago that young people aged 11-14 are in the midst of rapid physical, social and sexual development where “sexual relations are often brought to the fore” (p. 28). Similarly, scholars such as Goldman (2011a) and Lamb and Gilbert (2019a) noted that young people are reaching puberty earlier. In the Introduction to *The Cambridge Handbook of Sexual Development: Childhood and Adolescence* (Lamb & Gilbert, 2019b), they argued that “young people enter puberty earlier and come out as gay, lesbian, bisexual, and trans before leaving school” (p. 1). These comments highlight the growing need for research that includes young people under the age of 15.

From an international perspective, literature exploring the sexual health needs of young people under 15 years of age is also limited (Igras et al., 2014; Naezer, 2018). Igras et al. (2014) conducted an analysis of issues facing very young adolescents (VYA), from an “ecological and life-course perspective found in the adolescent health framework” (p. 555). They found that data from a range of international studies indicated that around 50% of the 1.2 billion young people on the planet in 2012 were under 14 years of age. In their discussion, Igras et al. (2014) argued that VYA were “dealing with emerging fertility in the context of rapid puberty changes” (p. 555) and that education and health circles largely overlooked their needs.

This brief overview of the literature highlights that both international and Australian scholars have reported that early onset of puberty can influence the social and sexual health requirements of young people under 15 years of age (Hird & Jackson, 2001; Igras et al., 2014; Lamb & Gilbert, 2019a). However, to date, little research exploring the experiences of this age group has been undertaken. Despite a growing body of scholarship acknowledging the importance of recognising the need for research about young people in the early years of puberty, the complex needs of young people under the age of 15 remain under examined (Goldman, 2011a; Igras et al., 2014; Lamb & Gilbert, 2019a). The study presented in this thesis seeks to address this gap by contributing data from a small group of participants from across genders, aged 11-14, who discussed their lived experiences of intimacy.

Across the literature, there has been a gendered focus on the intimate and sexual experiences of young women with few scholars exploring the intimate or sexual experiences of gender diverse young people or young men under 15 years of age (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019; Ringrose, 2013; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015a, 2015b). Therefore, the issues facing young women have dominated discussions about young people’s intimate lives, framing young women and girls “as most at risk of exposure to sexual grooming from adult sexual predators and self-sexualisation” (Ringrose, 2013, p. 114). Some of the issues facing young women include shaming

them for their interest in sexuality (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Quinlivan, 2014), discussing mediated body parts (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Ringrose et al., 2013) and the concern for the sexualisation of young white women (Buckingham & Chronaki, 2014; Buckingham & Jensen, 2012; Coy & Horvath, 2019; Fields, 2012). Further attention has been paid to practices of slut shaming, victim blaming and sexting that stigmatise some young women's online practices as unacceptable (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015). These discussions unfairly judge young women's digital intimate practices (Albury, 2015; Dobson, 2018; Hasinoff, 2012) and highlight that young men are regularly framed as perpetrators of unwanted sexual interest, emotionally underdeveloped (Holford, 2019) or alternatively, their experiences are ignored altogether (Albury, 2015). Coy and Horvath (2019) recently noted that the "many silences about young men's perceptions on sexualisation, pornography, and masculinities remain" (p. 466). Given Igras' et al. (2014) findings that at least fifty percent of young people in the world in 2012 were under 14 and Lamb and Gilbert's (2019a) comments that puberty is occurring earlier, knowledge of the intimate experiences of young people under 15 is urgently needed. Scholars have noted this need for many years now but to date there has been little progress to understand the intimate lives of young people under 15, particularly the intimate lives of young men or gender diverse individuals (Igras et al., 2014).

The gendered nature of debates about young people's intimate lives continues across education curricula acknowledging the impact of digital environments on relationships and sexuality (Crabbe, 2014; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Fisher et al., 2019; Ollis, 2016). Through a "close reading" (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015, p. 2) of two educational films designed to deter young people from sexting, Dobson and Ringrose (2015) argued that issues facing young men have been "side-lined" (p. 6) in sexuality education material. They argued that issues of masculinity are largely unexplored in the sexting films they analysed for their research. In a study that counters this gendered focus on young women, Watson and McKee (2013) considered the

views of individuals from a range of genders when researching practices of masturbation and media usage. They identified that young men, like young women were subjected to a form of shaming and negative stigma when using media to facilitate masturbation (Watson & McKee, 2013). The lack of focus on young men is problematic because, without a more substantial voice, they continue to be framed in opposition to young women, and their behaviours stigmatised in negative ways (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Holford, 2019).

Discussion seeking to understand the emotional capacity of young men has received limited attention across the literature. Holford's (2019) study of young people involved in heterosexual relationships extended the pattern of many previous studies highlighting young men's incapacity to engage emotionally in relationships. Her study continues the discourse of the emotionally underdeveloped male and ensures the idea that women "do the emotional work for two" (Holford, 2019 p.162) in heterosexual relationships, remains unchallenged. In contrast to this common deficit discourse, Allen's (2013a) study of sexual learning with 22 young people aged 16-18 found data from four young men, obtained using photo methods, offered "a view of male sexual embodiment that sheds light on a 'fleshier' side to young men's sexuality one that schools and existing research has tended to ignore" (p. 361). The arguments of a few scholars serve to highlight the need to build a more nuanced picture of young men's intimate, emotional and sexual lives. Therefore, one of the key findings from reviewing this literature is the limited understanding of the issues facing young men as they explore their intimate lives through digital environments. To address this gap, I focus much of my analysis on the intimate experiences of the three young men who participated in this study.

This section highlighted popular discourse of innocence that frames young people as in need of protection from risk or harm. I identified the way scholars using queer ideas have challenged this normative view of young people. I then introduced the concept of the queer child growing sideways. Through these discussions, I identified three key gaps in the literature. The

first gap relates to a lack of clarity about the age of participants, described as young people across sexuality research. The second gap identified the need for research focusing on the intimate lives of young people under 15 years of age. The final gap identified limited research exploring the intimate and digital lives of young men. The study documented in this thesis seeks to address these three gaps by contributing new knowledge about the intimate experiences of 10 young people aged 11-14, three of whom are young men. In the next section, I review literature associated with intimacy in both FTF relationships and digital environments.

2.4 Intimacy

In this section, I discuss literature from sociology scholars who have a robust history of exploring intimacy. To begin, I explore intimacy in relation to adults before considering the limited literature discussing the intimate lives of young people.

2.4.1 Intimacy and relationships. The definition of intimacy has continuously evolved across time (Berlant, 1998, 2008; Hart, 2015; Jamieson, 1999; Roscoe, Kennedy, & Pope, 1987). In the 1980s, Roscoe et al. (1987) noted that intimacy was defined as “deep involvement”, “emotional attachment”, “capacity to commit”, “mutual trust” and “sharing” (pp. 511-512). During the decade of the 1990s, intense debate amongst sociologists focused on the way social and political developments changed the nature of intimate relationships (Jamieson, 1999; Weeks, 1998). In the late 1990s, Weeks (1998) argued that the emancipation of women and their sexual liberation became a pathway through which marginalised groups of women and homosexuals transformed their intimate lives. At the same time, Berlant (1998) posited that intimacy, regardless of its form, was characteristic of energy and attachments involving “relation associated with tacit fantasies, tacit rules, and tacit obligations to remain unproblematic” (p. 287). Through this definition, Berlant (1998) acknowledged both the public and private nature of the intimate experience, and the implied understanding that the rules of intimacy are known tacitly. When

framed in this way, intimacy is inherently problematic because it is evolving and yet there is a normative expectation that the rules of intimacy are known and understood.

The concept of intimate publics introduced by Berlant (2008) extended the emancipatory work achieved through the sexual liberation movements. This expansion occurred through a recognition of the way media and consumer driven environments offered marginalised groups spaces to collaborate and share their intimate lives. As digital locations became the spaces where people explored intimacy more frequently, mediated intimate relationships became the focus of Jamieson's (2013) explorations of intimacy. The practice of developing intimacy through digital intimate spaces gained acceptance and popularity. As a result, numerous scholars explored the nature of online intimate practices in more detail (Chambers, 2013b; Dobson, Robards, & Carah, 2018; Hart, 2015; Robards, 2012). What these studies highlight is that forms of intimacy and many other aspects of daily life have changed significantly in response to social and technological developments. These studies highlight how such changes have affected adult experiences of intimacy but the way these changes have impacted the intimate lives of young people under the age of 15 is yet to be explored.

To begin the exploration of the literature on intimacy and young people, I turn to an historical source that reports how participant young people over the age of 15, defined intimate relationships in a study conducted in 1987. Roscoe et al. (1987) conducted a study of 277 undergraduate students with an average age of 19.1 years. All the participants attended an American "Midwestern university" (Roscoe et al., 1987, p. 521) of approximately 16,000 students from white middle class families. Roscoe et al. (1987) concluded that intimate relationships were associated with "openness, sharing, and trust" (p. 511). Across the data, males and females defined intimate relationships in slightly different ways, with just under half of the participants mentioning that sexual interaction was a significant aspect of an intimate relationship (Roscoe et al., 1987). Roscoe et al. (1987) found that a majority of the young people in the study

did not expect experiences of intimacy to involve sexual or physical intimate behaviours. This study highlighted the distinction between intimacy and sexuality and illustrated that a more nuanced and contemporary approach to the exploration of young people's intimate lives is necessary.

Research into young people's intimate lives focuses on the sexualised aspects of intimacy and relationships. The focus on the sexual aspect of intimacy is evident in research on sexting (Dobson, 2018; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015), young people's use of pornography (Coy & Horvath, 2019; Quinlivan, 2018b), exploring online intimate sexualised behaviours (Byron & Albury, 2018; Hart, 2018) and the prevention of gendered sexual violence (Ollis, 2016; Salter, 2018). The focus on the sexual aspect of intimacy is also evident in the studies exploring digital intimacy (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018) with only scant attention paid to broader notions of, or representations about, young people's experiences of intimacy that are not sexual (Albury, 2015; Byron & Albury, 2018; Cover, 2018; Hart, 2018). The dominance of research on the sexual aspects of intimacy reflects a focus on the perceived problematic nature of young people's sexuality rather than considering the complexity of a broader notion of intimacy. This problem-focused agenda directs research toward continued explorations of sexual forms of intimacy while the broader continuum of young people's intimate lives remains underexplored.

The propensity to sexualise young people's experiences of intimacy to the exclusion of other forms of intimacy is an issue that causes tension and trouble in the lives of young people (Albury, 2015; Fisher et al., 2019; Mitchell et al., 2014; Renold, 2006). In an ethnographic study involving 60 primary school children aged 11-12, Renold (2006) argued that children are habitually categorised, discussed and controlled by a view that frames all relationships through a "hegemonic heterosexual matrix" (p. 506). Through a process of "thinking otherwise" with queer theory and Butler's (1990) concept of the heterosexual matrix, Renold (2006, p. 506) troubled what she called the "adult-centric tendencies to conceptualise young children's preoccupation

with boyfriend and girlfriends solely as them practising and performing ‘older’ (hetero) genders/sexualities” (p. 505). Although positioned from different theoretical and disciplinary lines of scholarship, Renold (2006), Jamieson (2013) and Roscoe et al. (1987) all identified intimacy and intimate relationships as regularly framed through language and concepts that sexualised young people’s desire to engage with people of other genders. The sexualisation of intimate exchanges has been further complicated as digital devices became ubiquitous in the lives of young people (Albury, 2015).

2.4.2 Digital intimacy. The literature exploring sexuality and relationships through digital practices indicates that online intimacy shares many of the features traditionally associated with FTF intimacy (Chambers, 2013a; Jamieson, 2013). These features include spending time together, providing care, and showing concern. As digital environments expanded ways of expressing intimacy, Jamieson (2013) broadened her earlier definition of intimacy to define online intimacy as “an intimacy of the self rather than the body” (p. 18). Jamieson (2013) argued notions of modern intimacy do not “privilege the physical co-presence of face-to-face” (p. 17), and thus, she made a distinction between physical intimacy involving the body and intimacy of the self-established through sharing online. In this argument, Jamieson (2013) recognised that digital communication practices shifted the way many people experience intimate self-disclosures. These shifts relate to initiating and exploring intimate contact online rather than through family or social relations, expressing feelings and emotions through text and images and conducting intimate relationships without physical co-presence.

In contrast to this widely accepted view, a number of recent studies have challenged this demarcation and exposed notions of online and offline intimacy as outdated and unrelated to the lived experiences of young people (Chambers, 2017; Handyside & Ringrose, 2017). Chambers’ (2013a) exploration of intimacy on Facebook indicated that much “mediated intimacy” (p. 164) combined FTF interactions with a range of communication experiences conducted across

multiple SMP. Similarly, Handyside and Ringrose (2017) explored the dynamics of Snapchat through focus group discussions with two male and six female participants aged 18. Through their analysis of data, they found that conversations or stories discussed on Snapchat impacted participants' "intimacies and rationalities online and offline" (Handyside & Ringrose, 2017, p. 2).

For many young people the distinction between physical and digital intimacy is blurry because they move between these spaces continuously and with ease (Handyside & Ringrose, 2017). However, for many scholars the focus of research is still framed through a notion of "digital intimacies" (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018, p. xix). An emerging body of scholarship has explored the digital intimate practices of adults and young people through an evolving theoretical framing known as digital intimate publics. Expanding Berlant's (2008) concept of intimate publics, Dobson, Robards, et al. (2018) have compiled a collection of articles that theorise intimacy across digital spaces in ways that suggest digital intimacy differs from FTF intimacy. For many adults the binary notion of online, offline intimacy may be commonplace. However, limited literature on the thoughts of young people under 15 provides an understanding of how this group of young people navigate digital and FTF forms of intimacy. What scholars from a range of disciplines have established is that young people, regardless of their age, are increasingly exploring intimacy across digital environments and SMP (Kang & Rosenthal, 2014; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019).

Digital intimate publics are online spaces where individuals and groups come together to express "shared worldviews and shared emotions" (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 5). Within digital environments, Kennedy (2018) conceptualised notions of sharing and oversharing as both material and immaterial acts that are interpreted in a highly subjective manner. Regardless of how sharing within digital environments has been framed, scholars working with the concept of digital intimate publics argued that online spaces provide marginalised people, such as gays, women and young people, with access to sites of belonging. Within these sites of belonging, marginalised

groups have found spaces to explore forms of intimacy that in other locations would be considered excessive or transgressive (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). Explaining the emerging theory of digital intimate publics, Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018) point out the many ways that the mechanics of SMP combine with the behavioural practices of users to “capture and channel the human capacity to affect one another” (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 9). Their observations of the way individuals are affected by their digital intimate experiences, resonates with the work of Ahmed (2004a, 2004b, 2010a) who explored how emotion and affect attaches and moves among individuals and through social worlds. The concepts of emotion and affect are important to this study and explained in detail in Chapter 3.

Digital intimacy exacerbates the ambivalent nature of intimacy. Theorised through the concept of digital intimate publics, Bollmer (2018) explored the complex way that intimacy affects individuals. He argued that the ambivalent feelings attached to intimacy makes intimacy “*unbearable*” (2018, p. 47) for many people. Bollmer (2018) exposed the vulnerabilities of human “bodies that can feel connected and yet remain forever separate and unknowable” (p. 48). Bollmer’s (2018) argument identified the subjective nature of intimacy and the many ways intimacy explored across digital intimate public spaces can affect individuals in different ways. Light (2014) and Light and Cassidy (2014) discussed the interconnected nature of coming together and being separate through an exploration of connection and disconnection in SNS. The theorisation that disconnective behaviours facilitate connection within SNS queers the normative notion of disconnection and offers other ways of framing disconnective practices (Light 2014; Light and Cassidy 2014).

Through connections, new forms of intimacy are forming. Cover (2018) identified the way that digital intimate publics facilitated the exploration of new forms of intimate expression for both marginalised individuals and those identified through normative labels such as “masculine heterosexuality” (Cover, 2018, p. 116). Through a queer analysis of sexualised

webcamming practices, Cover (2018) illustrated how heterosexual adult males found sites of belonging to explore new forms of sexual intimacy and expression online. Similarly, Hart (2018) found that for young people aged 18-25 exploring intimacy on Tumblr, emotional authenticity was important for developing trust and the capacity to engage in forms of kink and nude self-expression online. This review of literature exploring digital intimacy, highlights the subjective and often ambivalent nature of intimacy and points to the many affordances and some challenges of exploring intimacy within digital environments. These studies illustrate the subjective nature of the experience of intimacy and highlight once again, the absence of any understanding of the intimate experiences of young people aged under 15. Therefore, the study outlined in this thesis contributes to the field by considering a broad notion of intimacy as it relates to the lived experiences of young people aged 11-14 exploring intimacy within digital environments.

In this section, I have reviewed literature relating to intimacy with adults, young people and within digital environments. The literature highlighted that the concept of intimacy has evolved as social and technological changes have altered the way individuals engage with others. It highlighted that digital intimate publics can support marginalised people to explore intimacy in ways not possible in FTF intimacy, and illustrates the lack of studies discussing young people under 15 years of age.

2.5 Digital Intimate Practices

In the following section, I consider the literature outlining the range of SMP used by young people and discuss a range of intimate digital practices. Throughout this discussion, I use the phrase digital intimate practices to align with the current scholarly discussions associated with intimate practices undertaken within digital environments (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018).

2.5.1 Social media platforms (SMP). Literature documenting the digital intimate practices of young people examines a range of behaviours undertaken across numerous digital platforms (Albury, 2015; Byron & Albury, 2018; Dobson, 2018; Handyside & Ringrose, 2017;

Hart, 2018; Ovens & Morison, 2016). In the recent quantitative study of Australian secondary school students, Fisher et al. (2019) reported that of the 6,327 students from Years 10, 11 and 12, who participated in the online survey, 99.3% used Facebook, 92.6% used Snapchat and 92.5% used Instagram in the two months prior to the study. Numerous qualitative studies have also highlighted that young people explore and engage in intimacy and relationships through a wide range of SNS, SMP and digital practices (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Hjorth, 2013; Madianou & Miller, 2013; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015a). Exploring how media and digital technology affords and affects “interpersonal communication” (p. 170) Madianou and Miller (2013) argued for a theory of “polymedia” (p. 170) to think of technology and users as more integrated and less separate. Their theory of Polymedia diverts focus from thinking about the individual qualities of particular digital environments to highlight how the “social and emotional concerns” (Madianou & Miller, 2013, p. 171) of users affects both interpersonal relations and relations with technology itself.

Other studies exploring young people’s digital intimate practices explored platforms including My Space (Dobson, 2013), Facebook (Chambers, 2013b; Lincoln & Robards, 2014; Robards, Lincoln, Pinkard, & Harris, 2018), Instagram (Hendry, 2016), Snapchat (Fisher et al., 2019; Handyside & Ringrose, 2017), Tumblr (Hart, 2018) and one forensic analysis of the instant messaging application Kik (Ovens & Morison, 2016). Across much of the literature, there has been a focus on the digital platform of Facebook (Caers et al., 2013; Chambers, 2013b; Lambert, 2013; Lincoln & Robards, 2014; Robards et al., 2018). Multiple scholars have considered the way both adults and young people use Facebook to retain and maintain friendship and to connect with family members living at a distance (Cabalquinto, 2018; Chambers, 2017; Lambert, 2013; Lincoln & Robards, 2014; Robards et al., 2018). Although many studies explore a broader range of SMP, most focus on the sexual aspect of intimacy, while scholars of Facebook tend to explore friendship and family relations.

Social media platforms provide digital intimate public spaces where young people engage in a range of intimate practices. Naezer and Ringrose (2019) note that social media sites mediate “courtship practices such as meeting, flirting, going out and breaking up” (p. 423). Similarly, Byron and Albury (2018) identified the way same sex attracted young people used hook up apps to view potential partners or develop intimate contact online. Hart (2018) examined the way young people used Tumblr to define their identity and to explore forms of sexual intimacy through public displays of their bodies. In addition, Light and Cassidy (2014), discussed the reasons for, and consequences of, connecting and disconnecting within online environments as interconnected practices. These scholars explored forms of intimacy such as friendship, sexual attraction, displaying and accepting queer bodies, sharing kink practices and issues associated with growing up online (Lincoln & Robards, 2014). These studies indicate that young people use digital intimate public spaces to form a multitude of intimate connections. Regardless of the location where young people undertake intimate practices, what is consistent across the literature is an acknowledgement that young people are exploring their intimate and sexual lives across multiple digital environments.

2.5.2 Sexualised messaging. Another area of digital intimacy that scholars from sociology, education, media, and cultural studies scholars have focused on are the behavioural practices of self-representation. Many scholars have explored selfie culture, the practices of sending ‘dick pics’ (Morten Birk Hansen, 2019; Waling & Pym, 2019) and the practice of sending nude images known as sexting (Albury, 2015; Dobson, 2018; Hasinoff, 2012; Ringrose et al., 2013).

Various terms for digital image sharing are used across the literature. For example, the term ‘dick pics’ refers to an image of a penis “usually sent unsolicited by heterosexual, cisgendered men to women” (Waling & Pym, 2019, p. 70). The term sexting is the label used to describe the practice of sending and receiving a range of intimate and sexualised content across

digital environments by individuals of any gender (Albury, 2015; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015b). Hasinoff (2012) defined sexting as the “practice of sending sexually explicit images or text through mobile phones or internet applications” (p. 450). Ringrose et al. (2013) included the concepts of “sharing and forwarding” (p. 306) to the definition in their exploration of teen girls’ sexting practices that challenged post-feminist views of female sexual liberation. Albury (2015) introduced the concept of “self-representation” (p.1735) expanding discussions beyond a problem focused understanding of image sharing practices. More recently, Dobson (2018) identified that the sexting behaviours of young women were identified as only one of “several digitally mediated intimate and sexual practices” (p. 93) contributing to moral panics about young people’s digital behaviours.

Particular styles of sexting have raised concern and heightened moral panics about the practice. In particular, the practice of sending images of the penis have been highly criticised (Morten Birk Hansen, 2019; Waling & Pym, 2019). Waling and Pym (2019) concluded that current framing of the practice of sending dick pics, lacks critical understanding of men’s motivations for engaging in the practice and reinforces normative notions of heterosexual males as lacking capacity to engage in intimacy. Regardless of the specific focus of each scholar’s explorations, the intimate and sexualised practices of self-representation discussed across the literature point to a lack of understanding about the motivations for sending sexualised content (Albury, 2015). In particular, there is a lack of understanding about the motivations of young people under the age of 15. Furthermore, except for Albury’s (2015) discussion of young men’s engagement in the practice of creating and sharing “sneaky hats” (p. 1739) there is a lack of understanding about why young men engaged in sexualised self-representation practices, and how they felt when they received unsolicited sexualised images from young women.

A number of scholars have theorised digital picture sharing in ways that seek to consider the practice outside the usual binary of risk and harm. Through a theoretical lens of sexting as

media production, Hasinoff (2012) argued that a narrow, deficit framing of sexting ignores the creative actions and decision making processes that young people are engaging in as they produce sexualised messages. She argued that, when framed as conscious and consenting media producers young people are “developing norms and ethics of sexting based on consent” (Hasinoff, 2012, p. 450). She further argued that the negative framing of young people’s digital image sharing ignores the opportunities inherent in social media practices. Albury (2015) made a similar observation when she categorised young people’s practices as either public or private selfies.

Hasinoff (2012) and Albury (2015), found that adults often “misread” (Albury, 2015, p. 1738) young people’s self-representations and labelled them as sexting. Albury (2015) highlighted that “joke selfies” (p. 1734) and various other forms of self-representation involving images of the body, were regularly misunderstood by adults as examples of sexting. Studies from the UK (Ringrose et al., 2013), Australia (Albury, 2015) and the USA (Hasinoff, 2012) identified that young people are aware of the negative way that adults viewed their intimate digital practices. These studies call for more research to examine and potentially bridge the misunderstandings that surround young people’s digital intimate practices and adult perceptions of these sharing practices. Regardless of the disciplines or theoretical perspective of scholars exploring these issues, most agree that adult attempts to educate or stop sexting practices have failed (Albury, 2015; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Hasinoff, 2012). Adult views on the practice focus on preventing risk and harm. However, Dobson (2018) recently argued that the focus of debates should explore issues of power and value attached to the practice of sending sexual images in order to understand how social and technological conditioning affects young people engaging in sexualised image exchanges.

The literature reviewed in this section identified three areas of focus concerning young people’s digital intimate practices. Firstly, young people use a range of SMP and FTF environments to explore their intimate lives. Secondly, literature exploring the practice of sexting

identified the affordances of framing young people's intimate sharing practices through the lens of media production and self-representation rather than sexualisation or risky behaviour. Finally, the literature indicated that adults often misinterpret what young people are doing and therefore have little understanding of young people's motivations for engaging in digital intimate sharing practices. In the next and final section of this review, I briefly consider literature from scholars who researched sexuality education, sexuality and identity with young people in school environments.

2.6 Sexual Learning in Schools

In this section, I consider how sex education has evolved and the multiple ways that scholars and educators are working to develop new approaches to education about intimacy, sexuality and relationships in a social and political climate that is becoming more risk averse and conservative.

2.6.1 Sex/sexuality/relationship education. Multiple terms describe various forms of education designed to teach young people about sexuality and relationships. These terms include sex education, sexuality education, sex and relationships education, and respectful relationships education. The changes in the labels used to define various forms of sex education mark some of the ways that sexuality education has evolved over time. Despite these name changes, there is a long history of education research and scholarship analysing the sex and sexuality education delivered to young people (Cook, 2012a, 2012b; Mitchell et al., 2011).

The content of sex education focused on the biological aspects of puberty, sexual reproduction and the prevention of pregnancy (Cook, 2012a, 2012b; Goldman, 2001, 2011b). In the 1980s and 1990s, fear of HIV AIDS sparked a focus on the prevention of sexually transmitted infections (Harrison, 2000). Then in the 2000s, discussions about LGBTIQ students were included in sexuality education and were formalised through the introduction of the Safe Schools Program in 2014 (Allen, 2010; Law, 2017; Quinlivan, 2011). Recently, digital practices (Crabbe

& Corlett, 2013; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015) and the prevention of gender-based violence (Albury, Carmody, Evers, & Lumby, 2011; Ollis, 2011, May, 2016) have become focal points within sexuality and relationships education. The introduction of these foci has been in response to collective and media panic over young people's intimate digital practices and public outcry in response to increasing family violence caused by gender inequity. According to Buckingham and Jensen (2012), "media panics" (p. 3) is a term used to describe panic characterised by excessive media concern about an issue that is "not *really* about what it claims to be about, but is in fact about something else" (p. 6). The influence of media panics focusing on sexualised digital behaviour and family violence has expanded the focus of sexuality and relationship education in recent years. The inclusion of curricula attending to these issues has made the field more complex for teaching staff and extended the focus of risk and harm discourses to include notions of intimacy that extend beyond sexual harm to include harm from digital environments and intimate relationships not framed through sexual intimacy (Crabbe, 2014; Ollis, 2016).

It is becoming more widely accepted that educational programs that aim to support young people to develop healthy intimate and sexual lives need to recognise that digital environments are now part of their everyday lived experiences (Albury, 2014; Kang & Rosenthal, 2014; Quinlivan, 2018c; Renold & Ringrose, 2016). One of the difficulties faced by educators who favour progressive thinking is the limited and deficit framing of young people's intimate lives (Allen, 2013b; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Gilbert, 2007, 2014). The negative conceptualisation of young people's intimate lives perpetuate discourses of shame, silence and the normalisation of inequitable power relationships in some educational curricula and many classroom contexts (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Quinlivan, 2014, 2018b). Recently Quinlivan (2018b) considered what might be possible if young people could engage in more open ended learning practices where "there is no 'right' answer" (Quinlivan, 2018b, p. 89) to questions, comments or activities generated within classrooms. Recognising the need to work "otherwise" (Quinlivan, 2018d, p. 2)

with young people's lived experience of intimacy and sexuality in classroom settings, many scholars call for practical and participatory approaches to sexuality and relationship education that engage young people in individual and more relevant ways of exploring their lived experiences of relationships, intimacy and sexuality.

Participatory and creative approaches support young people to consider the range of issues that influence their experiences of intimacy and sexuality (Albury, 2014; Buckingham & Chronaki, 2014; McKee et al., 2010; Ollis et al., 2019; Quinlivan, 2018e). Recently, education scholars have been working to reconceptualise and transform sexuality education. In a new book reflecting on her life as both a classroom teacher and a sexuality researcher, Quinlivan (2018d) considered how shifts in theoretical and pedagogical approaches could make sexuality and relationship education "more meaningful for young people" dealing with "contemporary sexuality and gender politics in their everyday lives" (p. 2). Similarly, Ollis et al. (2019) worked with 100 students aged 15-19 as co-researchers to better understand what their "perspectives and priorities" (p. 2) might be in relation to sexuality education. Both these discussions emphasised the need to transform education about sexuality, relationships and intimacy through self-directed and creative learning opportunities. A review of the literature exploring this issue suggests that a move toward participatory modes of sexuality and relationship education is necessary and vital to support young people as they explore their intimate lives across digital and FTF location.

Throughout this discussion, I have briefly considered current foci and practices relating to sexuality education. This discussion highlighted the need for sexuality and relationship education that focuses on the lived experience of young people to address the complexity of their intimate experiences beyond sexual intimacy. This study addresses the gaps identified in this review of the literature by engaging young people as research participants in self-directed creative filmmaking which encouraged them to explore and narrate their lived experiences of intimacy. In Chapter 4, Methodology, I discuss in more detail, literature from studies using participatory data production

methods that offered research participants self-directed, creative learning practices to explore their lived experiences of a range of issues.

2.7 Conclusion

I began this literature review with a discussion exploring the work of queer scholars many of whom are now working with new materialist ideas (Allen, 2018b; Renold, 2018). In Section 2.3, I identified the problematic nature of the childhood innocence framing and the general use of the term young people across participants aged anywhere between 10-27 years. In Section 2.4, I highlighted that notions of intimacy have evolved across time and the impact that technology has had on the continuation of this change.

The review of the literature identified three key gaps. Firstly, there is little scholarly discussion focusing on the intimate experiences of young people under the age of 15. Secondly, this review identified that the intimate experiences of young men are often overlooked or if discussed, they are framed through a heteronormative binary that places them in opposition to young women. The third and final gap in the literature identified that many scholars focus on the sexual aspect of intimacy and framed young people through the notion of childhood innocence. The discourse of childhood innocence problematise young people's sexual subjectivity and neglect the broader aspects of intimacy that concern young people. This thesis seeks to address all three gaps identified in the literature to build a more nuanced understanding of the intimate experiences of young people aged 11-14. Next, in Chapter 3, I explain the queer theoretical approach that has guided this study through the design, data production and data analysis stages.

Chapter 3: Thinking Sideways

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I reviewed literature relating to the intimate and digital lives of young people. I established that the majority of research focused on the sexual aspects of intimacy as it relates to young people over the age of 15. In this chapter, I begin by discussing the after queer approach (Section 3.2) that has influenced all aspects of this study. I then describe the three key concepts used across the study including the queer child growing sideways (Stockton, 2009) (Section 3.3), the concept of intimate publics (Berlant, 1998), and digital intimate publics (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018) (Section 3.4), and the concept of sticky emotions (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a) (Section 3.5). To conclude, I describe how I used these concepts to challenge the normative framing of young people's intimate practices as risky and largely generative of harm (Dobson, 2018; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Gilbert, 2014; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019). Figure 2 visually represents the theoretical framework.

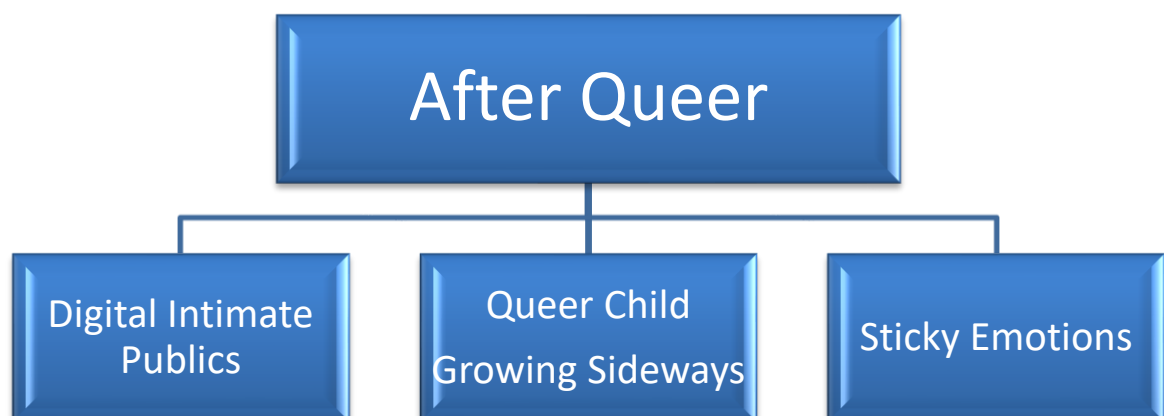


Figure 2. Theoretical framework

3.2 After Queer

This study employed a post-structural lens informed by queer theory (Gilbert, 2014; Stockton, 2009; Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010) across the research design, data generation and data analysis processes. However, responding to a call from Talburt and Rasmussen (2010), I engaged an after queer interpretation of queer theory. According to Talburt and Rasmussen (2010) after queer theory offers education scholars a way to explore questions that consider issues of power and inequity beyond sex, identity and gender politics. In a special issue exploring after queer, Talburt and Rasmussen (2010) argued for a queer approach that had no “proper subject” and no “proper location” (p. 10) of enquiry. A study framed through an after queer lens is therefore, open to fluidity, and changes throughout all aspects of the process.

A queer approach does not prescribe a specific way of thinking about things. Interestingly, the purpose of an after queer interpretation of queer theory is to challenge normalised understandings of everything, including queer theory itself. According to Gowlett and Rasmussen (2014), at its core “queer theory shakes and unsettles sedimented knowledge but does so without recommending a particular remedy” (p. 333). Viewed as a theory that challenges the binary oppositions of normative and non-normative labelling, an after queer approach offers alternative ways of exploring situations where classifications separate individuals or groups in hierarchical or opposing power relations. The separations common across queer research might also include a desire for “proper subjects” (Talburt & Rasmussen, 2009 p. 2). of queer research that presupposes a normative notion that issue of sexuality, gender and intersectionality are the desired or proper foci of queer theory. In this study, the use of after queer theory actively seeks to challenge this paradoxical notion of normativity within queer theory itself. The focus of an after queer enquiry might therefore consider issues of disadvantage or marginalisation outside the common intersecting social categories of race, class, age, sexuality, ethnicity, religion.

I engaged with after queer ideas for three key reasons. Firstly, through after queer I applied the principles of queer thinking outside the usual domain of sex, sexuality and gender to consider a more complex view of young people's intimate lives. Secondly, an after queer approach offered the possibility of exploring particular phenomenon through what Talburt (2010) called "subjunctive methodologies" (p. 53). In Chapter 4, Methodology, I explain in more detail how a subjunctive methodology recognises the processes undertaken to engage in research without necessitating the certainty of knowing exactly what will eventuate from or occur during the research process. Finally, I engaged with after queer ideas because this interpretation of queer theory recognises that it is possible and perhaps necessary, to consider together, things, people and concepts such as gender, sexuality and intimacy usually positioned in binary opposition to each other.

Theorising with this evolving notion of queer theory, I explored the intimate experiences of young people. These young people are "othered" (Robinson & Davies, 2019, p. 59) or considered marginalised by their status as subjects exploring their intimate lives during a period Stockton (2016) described in terms of culturally constituted "innocence" (p. 62). The investigation and explorations of intimacy undertaken in this study, linked the "seemingly non-sexual and the sexual, the seemingly normal and the queer, the repeated and the emergent" (Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010, p. 2) in alternative and potentially new ways. Through an exploration of the intimate lives of young people aged 11-14, I contribute and further the use of after queer scholarship within education research. This contribution highlights a broader understanding of young people's intimate experiences, and expands understandings beyond a gendered and narrowed focus on sexual intimacy. Next in Section 3.3, I explain my interpretation and use of Stockton's (2009) concept of the queer child growing sideways.

3.3 Queer Child Growing Sideways

In this section, I explain my interpretation of several elements of the queer child (Section 3.3.1) and how I used the concept of the “queer child [...] growing sideways” (Stockton, 2009, p. 220) to theorise the 10 young people who participated in this study, and analyse their intimate experiences. In Section 3.3.2, I offer a rationale for why I have focused specifically on the “child queered by innocence” (Stockton, 2009, p. 30) and the notion of “sideways growth” (Stockton, 2009, p. 13) to analyse data.

3.3.1 The queer child. To theorise the young people in this study, I worked with the concept of the queer child growing sideways. Stockton (2009) offered an alternative view of childhood from the perspective of literary studies, queer theory and psychoanalysis. In her theorisation of children/young people, she argued it is possible to see “any and *every* [emphasis in original] child as queer” (Stockton, 2009, p. 2). Through examples of the various ways that literature and cinema have offered non-normative understandings of young people in popular culture, Stockton (2009) argued that the fictions she critiqued were “literally teaching us to see” (p. 33) the strangeness of all young people. The queer child Stockton (2009) illuminated through fiction, is characterised as missed, ignored or under-recognised within developmental accounts of childhood that emerged during the “middle of the seventeenth century” (p. 40). After an assessment of childhood studies she argued that, through a developmental lens, the child is characterised as “innocent” and “weak” (Stockton, 2009, p. 41) and is therefore understood as a creature of “gradual growth and managed delay” (Stockton, 2009, p. 41).

The culturally constructed notion of young people as innocent and weak places them in a conflicted state of growth. Drawing on the work of Freud and queer scholars such as Kincaid and Edelman, Stockton (2009) argued that innocence, in and of itself, creates tension in the relationships between adults and young people making them “thick with complication” (p. 5). The adults placed in opposition to this innocent child/young person aim to keep the young person

from crossing over into the space of lost innocence characterised as a place inhabited by adults or children contaminated by overt sexualisation or sexual abuse (Duschinsky, 2013). Stockton (2009) argued that the innocence imposed upon young people has made them strange and unapproachable to many adults. However, the strangeness of young people framed as innocent subjects is further complicated because they are both different from adults and strange to adults. Stockton (2009) argued that the desire of many adults to protect young people from their own complicated strangeness has made them “fundamentally more foreign to adults” (p. 5) than at any other time in history. Through their strangeness when compared with adults, all young people are therefore conceptualised as queer.

The understanding that every child/young person is queer is liberating in that it offers an alternative and complex theorisation of young people’s intimate lives that challenges the developmental view of them as weak and innocent. Through an explanation of the “ghostly gay child” Stockton (2009, p. 3) outlined the strangeness of all children and posits that “every child is queer” (Stockton, 2009, p. 9) because, “no matter how you slice it, the child from the standpoint of “normal” adults is always queer [...] since it, too, is not allowed to be sexual” (p. 7). The concept of the queer child offered a perspective of childhood that challenged normative notions of young people as innocent or devoid of intimacy and sexuality. Recognition that young people are a marginalised group because they are considered queer or other to powerful adults. This theorisation has helped me to conceive a research project that aimed to explore what might be possible if this power structure was challenged and the intimate and sexual subjectivity of young people recognised and accepted without question.

Stockton’s (2009) concept of the queer child presents four categorisations of behaviour or visual appearance by which a child/young person is considered queer or strange when viewed through a normative lens. Stockton (2009) began her account of the multiple ways that young people are theorised as queer by first defining the “ghostly gay child” (p. 17). The ghostly gay

child is the young person with unrecognised or undisclosed same sex preferences unknown to them until adulthood. The second queer child is the “grown homosexual” (Stockton, 2009, p. 22) who is the ghostly gay child understood in retrospective terms. Through this framing, the gay child is conceptualised as a ghost of the past recognised by the grown homosexual looking back at their childhood. The third queer child is the child queered by anger and sexuality. Stockton (2009) classified this young person as “the child queered by Freud” (p. 27). The child queered by anger and sexuality is a young person characterised by excesses, desires and a precociousness that identifies them as a dangerous or a “sexual child with aggressive wishes” (Stockton, 2009, p. 27). Finally, Stockton (2009) described the fourth queer child as the child queered by innocence, colour or poverty. Stockton’s (2009) four conceptualisations of the queer child are aspects of all young people she identified and illuminated through their depictions in popular culture. Of all these depictions of the strangeness of young people, the child queered by the external and normative forces of innocence is the queer child that resonated most with the after queer framing of this study.

I engaged with the child queered by innocence for one key reason. In a Western context, it is common to frame young people under the age of 15 as lacking an intimate or sexual life (Robinson, 2013; Robinson & Davies, 2019; Stockton, 2009). However, like Stockton (2009), Gilbert (2014) and Robinson and Davies (2019), I argue that this framing has marginalised young people’s intimate and sexual subjectivity in ways that reduced their rights to education, experimentation and engagement in their intimate lives. Therefore, in order to challenge this normative framing and to conceptualise young people under 15 as agentic intimate and sexual subjects, I work with Stockton’s (2009) notion of the child queered by innocence in more detail.

The fictitious child queered by innocence is the child without a perceived intimate or sexual life. Stockton (2009) argued that the child queered by innocence is the “normative child – or the child who on its path to normativity, seems safe to us and whom we, therefore, seek to

safeguard at all cost” (p. 30). The perceived lack of a sexual or intimate past defined as innocence makes young people strange to adults who often think of themselves as having lost their innocence (Stockton, 2009). Understood through normative notions of childhood, the adult protects the innocence of young people by shielding them from harm. However, Stockton (2009) argued that the innocence imposed upon young people can be dangerous and harmful. The confusion and harm generated by a framing of childhood innocence, challenges young people creating conflict within themselves and between themselves and adults.

The concept of the child queered by innocence was used in a Canadian study to explore young people’s experiences of school based security and policing. Fisher (2011) draws heavily on Stockton’s (2009) theorising of the child queered by innocence to highlight the paradoxical nature of an innocence framing. In her study, she argued that framing the child as innocent confined young people to a form of protection from harm more representative of containment, punishment and a form of detention. The security and protection Fisher (2011) explored through the concept of the queer child, was designed to ensure normative upward growth toward obedience, regulation and adherence to social systems of control and protection. In Fisher’s (2011) study, the concept of the queer child troubled the normative notion of growth within the structure of the regulated school system. In this thesis, I apply the concept of the queer child in a new context and in a different way. I use the concept of the queer child to explore the intimate experiences of 10 young people aged 11-14. My use of the concept breaks new ground to think about the intimate lives of young people. The contribution made by this application of the queer child growing sideways offers a new way to challenge the framing of childhood innocence that perpetuates the over regulation of young people’s intimate lives.

Framed through after queer theory, and the concept of the queer child, growth is multidirectional rather than linear and upward. According to Stockton (2009), when viewed through normative conceptualisations of developmental growth young people grow upward

toward a desire for coupling and reproduction. A heteronormative framing of upwards growth positions the subjectivity of young people as developing through “gradual growth” and a “slow unfolding” toward a version of adulthood framed by “marriage, work, reproduction, and loss of childishness” (Stockton, 2009, p. 4). In contrast to this normative notion of upward growth, the queer child growing sideways posits a “different kind of claim for growth and for its intimate relations with queerness” (Stockton, 2009, p. 11).

Through her analysis of children and young people depicted across popular culture, media and fiction, Stockton (2009) built a case for an understanding of young people as growing sideways through the dominant and normative culture designed to delay their sexuality and intimacy. The concept of the queer child positions “the child as a creature of managed delay” (Stockton, 2016, p. 507) who uses any means available to them to move and thus grow sideways through the regulations of imposed delay. Stockton (2009) argued that young people use words, metaphors, objects and sideways relations to “craft sidelong movement of their own” (p. 5) to grow itself ‘in hiding [and] in delay” (p. 4). Through this conceptualisation, “sideways relations” are connections that offer young people “substitute lateral relations” where they can find an outlet for “hidden emotions” (Stockton, 2009, p. 120). Throughout this study, I argue that young people are growing sideways through using digital environments and the intimate publics that form there as they explore their intimate lives during periods of socially constructed and structurally imposed “managed delay” (Stockton, 2009, p.41).

One of the key problems that Stockton (2009, 2016) considered through her explorations of the queerness of all children is the notion of delay. Stockton (2009) argued that an imposed period of delay sets up an adult child/young person binary that distorts young people’s individual power and restricts their access to knowledge. The notion of delay is therefore central to the concept of the queer child. Stockton (2009) introduced the notion of managed delay in her early discussion of the queer child. However, she recently revised and updated the concept of the queer

child, the notion of delay and the concept of growing sideways in the “twenty first century” (Stockton, 2016, p. 505) by reiterating the key paradox of the queer child that, “‘we’ fear the children we would protect” (p. 505-506). Today, measures designed to protect the child “we” (Stockton, 2016, p. 505) fear and attempts to enforce young people’s delayed approach to sexual and intimate subjectivity are often focused on their access to and use of digital technology.

Approaches to delay that incorporate understandings of digital environments and technology are largely regulated by “risk focused literature” (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 213), educational discourse focusing on risk (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Leahy, 2014), and moral panic that digital spaces contribute to the loss of childhood innocence (Albright, 2012; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Robinson, 2012, 2013). Discourses of risk and harm seek to position young people as subjects not yet ready to engage in intimacy (Bragg & Buckingham, 2012; Dobson, 2018; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019), and position them as innocent or contaminated by sexuality and intimacy itself (Duschinsky, 2013). Countering this enforced delay is the queer child’s propensity to grow sideways.

3.3.2 Sideways growth. To grow sideways is to deviate from the normative notion of upward growth. Stockton’s (2009) concept of sideways growth challenges the normative understanding of young people as growing up, toward an adult status that is presumed to be heterosexual and reproductive. The normative upward view of growth recognises that the child/young person needs protection but has no legal status within society. This need for protection places young people in a stage of development framed by legal and social limbo. In this state of limbo, Stockton (2009) argued a young person has no freedom to “consent to sexual pleasure, or divorce its parents, or design its education, at least not by law” (p. 16). At the same time, the adults who administer the laws also govern, direct and at times, control the movements of young people. In modern times as the control and protection of young people increased, so too did the regulation of every aspect of the child’s development (Robinson, 2013; Stockton, 2009).

In her conceptualisation of the queer child, Stockton (2009) highlighted how the regulations that developed to enforce extreme protection and care, manifested in the “pain, closets, emotional labors, sexual motives and sideways movements that attend all children” (p. 3) regardless of their sexual orientation. Expanding the notion of feeling strange to all young people, Stockton (2009) posits that through imposed intimate and sexual delay, young people are growing toward a question mark suspended in developmental stages determined by adults rather than their own lived experiences.

Conceptualised through the queer child, young people find multiple ways to grow sideways through the delay imposed upon them by adults and the institutions that govern their lives. Stockton (2009) developed the term “sideways growth” (p. 13) to describe the characteristics of the “moving suspensions and shadows of growth” that “locates energy, vitality and (e)motion in the back and forth of connections and extensions that are not reproductive” (p. 13). The back and forth movements that accompany the exploration of many forms of intimacy are the attributes of growth Stockton (2009) described in terms of shadows or suspensions of normative upward growth. These sideways moves are described as occurring in the shadows because they are undertaken to the side of cultural ideas or expectations that characterise growth as managed and occurring through staged and controlled movement toward normative heterosexual reproduction and upwards growth.

Exploring the characteristics of the queer child, Stockton (2009) demonstrated how the young people portrayed in popular culture move and grow through delay by engaging in sideways relations with multiple entities including pets and “paedophiles” (Stockton, 2009, p. 5). Stockton (2009) argued that it is important to consider how motives of sideways relations are connected to young people’s desire for movement and growth to the side of normative developmental notions of upward growth. Throughout her exploration of the many ways that children and young people grow sideways, Stockton (2009) attempted to explore the question; “how does any child grow

itself inside delay?” (p. 7). In the data discussion chapters, I take up this question and explore how young people in this study grew through delay as they explored intimacy across a range of digital environments. I argue that digital environments offer sites, spaces and unlimited opportunities for young people to engage in sideways relations and thus grow sideways during periods of managed delay.

Growth through non-normative means is ongoing growth that occurs throughout the life span. Conceptualised in this way, there is no age limit nor end to intimate and sexual growth. Stockton (2009) posits that a person’s motivations, movements and thus experiences grow at any age across the life span. This conceptualisation of sideways growth challenges the adult/child binary common across developmental theories of childhood growth. The binary of the adult/child separation is challenged throughout Stockton’s (2009) concept of sideways growth because both adults and children continue to grow through their engagement in forms of intimacy that generate sideways growth. The concept of the queer child growing sideways challenges the adult/child binary, that falsely positions young people in an underdeveloped notion of intimacy, while at the same time, placing adults in an equally fictitious notion of a fixed or fully realised state of intimate maturity. Growth conceptualised outside this normative binary occurs through sideways relations with people and things often framed as destructive or dangerous. For many young people digital environments provide the opportunity and sense of belonging needed to engage in the sideways relations needed to grow “sideways” (Stockton, 2009, p. 220). Working with Stockton’s (2009) queer ideas about young people and growth has helped me to think about the many ways that digital devices and digital locations provide young people aged 11-14 with access points and sideways locations to explore their intimate lives during periods of managed delay.

Stockton (2009) has argued that, thus far, it is only in fictional forms that the queerness of children has been illustrated, explored and analysed. To further this idea, rather than examining young people portrayed in fictional narratives, I facilitated a research process where young

people themselves recorded their lived experiences of intimacy as they made short films. Through the analysis of data obtained from these short films this study makes a contribution to knowledge by building upon Stockton's (2009) conceptual queer child to explore how the concept of the queer child growing sideways relates to the lived experiences of young people exploring intimacy through digital environments. As I discuss later in Section 3.6, I engage with the concept of the queer child growing sideways to analyse and explore data produced as short films, across three data discussion chapters. To help me think about the way digital locations facilitated sideways growth, I also engaged with the concept of digital intimate publics. Digital intimate publics (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018) is an emerging theory that recognises the multiple ways that SMP can be understood as learning spaces where normative notions of intimacy and sexuality are being challenged.

3.4 (Re) thinking Intimacy

In this section, I theorise intimacy drawing on the work of Berlant (2008) before making the link to the emerging theory of digital intimate publics (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). As a concept, digital intimate publics recognises SMP as sites and spaces where marginalised people explore intimacy in new and emerging ways that challenge and disrupt normative notions of intimacy. As explained in Section 3.3, young people are considered marginalised through the notion of childhood innocence and their status as other to .

3.4.1 Intimate publics. Through a queer inspired theorisation, intimacy is an ambivalent concept related to attachments that generate both private and public experiences involving a sharing of the self with others (Berlant, 1998, 2008; Jamieson, 2013). As discussed in the literature review, (Chapter 2, Section 2.4), intimacy is a contested concept that evolves across time (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018; Jamieson, 1999, 2013; Weeks, 1998). Scholars have defined intimacy in a range of ways describing connections of “deep involvement” and “emotional attachment” (Roscoe et al., 1987, pp. 511-512). Jamieson (2013) argued that intimacy involves

practical attributes undertaken in co-presence. The intimate attributes Jamieson (1999, 2013) outlined included, “spending time together, providing care through physical acts” and providing empathy and love through “looks and body language” (Jamieson, 2013, p. 18). However, Chambers (2013a) challenged the idea that intimacy only occurs through co-presence when she argued that social media has influenced the way intimacy is now represented and expressed. In particular, she noted that boundaries between “close” and “loose” (Chambers, 2013a, p. 41) forms of intimacy have become more porous. Like Jamieson (2013), Berlant (1998) described intimacy as representing experiences involving practices of sharing something of the self with others. However, she emphasised the importance of recognising both the private and public nature of intimate experiences and the power relationships that the attachments of intimacy generate.

Berlant (1998) described intimacy as both a public and private experience. She emphasised the important role that intimacy plays in modern life when she argued that “people consent to trust their desire for “a life” to institutions of intimacy” (p. 281). The institutions of intimacy constructed by social expectations, media discourse and gendered notions of connection frame relationships in particular ways. In general, this framing normalises a heterosexual, monogamous and sexualised view of intimacy (Barker et al., 2018). Through a normative framing, intimate experiences are forms of connection conceptualised as hopeful, positive and optimistic (Berlant, 1998; Jamieson, 1999). Berlant (1998) argued that this complicated form of intimacy is common within a “mass-mediated sense of intimacy” (p. 282). However, in reality, lived experiences of intimacy are not always the optimistic and positive ideal sold by social discourse and public institutions. Instead, intimacy is regularly associated with ambivalent experiences that fall short of the hopeful narrative of private intimacy linked to normative social, public and private expectations.

Through these public and private attachments, experiences of intimacy are productive of joy and fulfilment, while at the same time, the absence or failure of a desired intimacy can generate vulnerability and pain. These dual experiences of intimacy have the potential to generate feelings that cause individuals to question not only their intimate life, but also, the experience of life itself. On this issue Berlant (1998) argued that intimacy's "potential failure to stabilize closeness always haunts its persistent activity, making the very attachments deemed to buttress "a life" seem in a state of constant if latent vulnerability" (p. 282). This queered view of intimacy stimulates a questioning process that opens up space to re-think what constitutes intimacy itself. In this questioning process, the vulnerability of new or emerging forms of intimate engagement as public and private experiences, are recognised. In relation to the young people involved in this study, new and different forms of intimacy that do not conform to a normative view of adult intimacy became visible through participants' narratives.

Such a conceptualisation of intimacy invites an understanding that to be intimate is to be open to vulnerability. It is the vulnerability of Berlant's (1998) conceptualisation of intimacy that resonates with the struggle of the "child queered by innocence" (Stockton, 2009, p. 30) and the voices of the young people who are the focus of this study. My interpretation and use of a queer conceptualisation of intimacy as attachments of vulnerability support a desire to understand something of the intimate experiences of young people aged 11-14 through exploration, rather than labelling or definition. The understanding that to be intimate is to be vulnerable also recognises the ongoing learning and potential for sideways growth that is possible when any individual is engaged in the practice of exploring and experiencing intimacy (Stockton, 2009).

A theorisation of intimacy as ambivalent recognises that growth through exploring and experiencing intimacy is a challenging process that is ongoing throughout the lifespan. According to Berlant (1998) the experimental nature of being intimate ensures "that virtually no one knows how to do intimacy" (p. 282). The lack of certainty associated with being intimate, and the

recognition that what it means to be intimate is constantly changing, resonates with the idea that children and young people grow sideways as they explore intimacy in person or across digital environments. In particular, a recognition of intimacy as an ambivalent and vulnerable experience supports the researcher's intention to explore young people's experiences of intimacy rather than explaining what those experiences of intimacy might mean. Engaging with Berlant's (1998) conceptualisation of intimacy, I recognised that intimacy is not one thing. Instead, intimacy is always evolving through public and private expectations that shape and form individual notions of the experiences that intimacy, and the emotions generated through intimacy create. Through this conceptualisation, intimacy is understood to be both about an aspirational desire to connect in certain ways and about the difficulties and "unavoidable troubles" (Berlant, 1998, p. 281) that accompany connections formed through both public and private narratives of sharing.

Connections of intimacy create and foreclose spaces where other forms of connection might have occurred. This understanding of intimacy recognises that intimate connections work to link "individual lives to the collective" of public institutions, public and private discourse and systems of power (Berlant, 1998, p. 283). In her theorisation of intimacy and the formation of the concept of intimate publics, Berlant (2008) identified that certain marginalised groups formed intimate collectives to fight structural inequities. She argued that an intimate public forms when "a market opens up a block of consumers" (Berlant, 2008, p. 5) who form a collective. These consumers come together connected by feelings that a particular idea, site or genre of texts expresses their unheard or under recognised experiences of the world. Through collective expression and the sharing of ideas, intimate publics make space for new forms of intimacy and create sites of belonging for marginalised peoples. As a concept that emerged from ideas drawn from the work of feminist, queer and psychoanalytic scholars, intimate publics is helpful in providing thinking tools to understand the spaces, peoples, ways of being and forms of intimacy "that have otherwise been deemed puny or discarded" (Berlant, 2008, p. 3).

Intimate publics, understood as evolving sites of learning and ambivalent attachment, produce spaces where individuals and groups share ideas and experiences. An example is the intimate public spaces that formed around “women’s culture” (Berlant, 2008, p. 5). In these spaces, women harnessed the power of emotion to challenge normative notions of what a “good life” and intimacy as “a good life” might look like (Berlant & Prosser, 2011, p. 182). Therefore, intimate publics are spaces of exploration and learning about what an intimate life might be outside a normative framing of intimacy. The ideas and experiences explored through intimate publics challenge what is accepted and expected to represent normative notions of intimacy. Today, a growing range of intimate publics are being explored in digital locations through “social media practices” (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018, p. xx). Engaging with Berlant’s (1998, 2008) concept of intimate publics, Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018) have identified and included an awareness of the complexities of social media practices into the concept of intimate publics. In the next section, I link the concept of intimate publics to digital environments to explore how the emerging theory of digital intimate publics offers a way to think differently about the intimate experiences of the young people in this study.

3.4.2 Digital intimate publics. The digital intimate publics that form in SMP provide marginalised peoples and groups with spaces of belonging (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018). As in other intimate publics, digital intimate publics are formed through engagement in what Berlant (2008) argued is “a commodity culture” (p. 8) where individuals engage in the hope of exploring intimacy beyond the confines of their existing world.

Over the past two decades, multiple studies have concluded that young people are finding a sense of belonging and community needed to build intimacy within digital environments (Albury, 2015; Naezer, 2018; Ringrose et al., 2013). These studies reveal that intimate publics are forming across SMP where young people seek and explore a range of intimacies online (Albury, 2015; Albury & Byron, 2016; Byron & Albury, 2018). The concept of digital intimate publics

provides thinking tools to consider what happens when individuals form intimate publics within digitally based SMP (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). Elaborating on Berlant's (2008, 2011) notion of intimate publics, Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018) argued that intimacy within digital environments is being developed through attachments where people are sharing common ideas and experiences. Digital intimate publics are understood as online spaces where individuals and groups come together to express "shared worldviews and shared emotions" (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 5). Today notions of intimacy are constantly evolving as new digital practices generate intimate experiences that question and challenge existing and normative notions of what it means to be intimate.

Digital intimate publics are spaces where non-mainstream intimacies become visible. According to Dobson, Robards, et al. (2018), intimacy is a highly contested concept because social media practices are constantly changing the shape and form of what constitutes attachment and thus, intimate connection. On this issue, Dobson, Robards, et al. (2018) argued,

The intimate publics of social media are increasingly the grounds for our identities, affects, and politics. They are reshaping the institutions of public life. The exploration, expression, and experimentation with the intimate that unfolds on social media is both conditioned by, and challenging to, the hegemonic public sphere. (p. xx).

Understood through the lens of digital intimate publics, forms of intimacy often defined as "excessive and socially transgressive" have emerged and become more visible (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 18).

A number of recent studies exploring digital intimacy through the concept of digital intimate publics identified new, non-normative expressions of intimacy as emerging and flourishing online. Cover (2018) highlighted the complexity of male heterosexual practices of webcamming in "*Chaturbate*" (p. 115). In this exploration of sexualised webcamming, Cover (2018) identified how digital intimate publics facilitated new protocols and practices for heterosexual men where "straight identities [were] doing queer things as a normative online

practice” (p. 114). In another example, Hart (2018) offered insight into the practices of nude selfie sharing between “non-hegemonic” (p. 178) young people. Within the intimate publics that formed on Tumblr, Hart (2018) identified that emotional authenticity was highly valued and through the expression of this authenticity, safe spaces emerged where young people talked about their bodies in ways that were not possible elsewhere. These two examples highlight how expressions of intimacy that formed in digital intimate publics challenged normative notions of intimacy. Through their exposure and the acceptance of the members who formed non-normative intimate publics, the individuals in these two studies became more visible and thus, less marginalised (Cover, 2018; Hart, 2018). In these examples, new and developing digital forms of intimacy, that might otherwise be labelled excessive, appear to have found acceptance.

Marginalised forms of intimacy, often ignored or concealed from view are reported to thrive within digital intimate public spaces. Digital intimate publics, offer marginalised people “such as girls, queers, mothers, lovers” (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 18) and young people under the age of 15, environments where they can explore their intimate lives. The visibility of marginalised peoples and the alternate forms of intimate connection they practice, can generate “affect and attention and thus create new kinds of value” (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 19) that expands understandings of intimacy itself, and how intimacy might be practised in non-normative ways. Thus, digital intimate publics offer spaces where the rules of engagement are less restrictive. These rules are constantly evolving to accommodate the excesses of sharing too much and the transgression of breaking the often unspoken rules, that go with exploring and creating new intimate experiences online (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). The idea that the rules of engagement are less restrictive in digital environments is important for young people aged 11-14, because outside digital intimate publics, the obligations of intimacy are clearly outlined in risk fuelled education and media discourses that frame their intimate and digital lives as problematic (Albury, 2015; Byron & Albury, 2018; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Naezer, 2018). Through normative risk and problem fuelled framing, the intimate experience of young people are

conceptualised as a fixed ideal that can be achieved rather than a series of ongoing questions to be considered (Gilbert, 2014), adventures to be undertaken (Naezer, 2018) or sideways movements to be explored (Stockton, 2009).

The emerging theory of digital intimate publics recognise that SMP are experimental learning spaces. These spaces are understood to be an important “part of the processes whereby pedagogies of intimate life as life itself are learnt, (re)constituted, (re)formed, contested, and disrupted” (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018, p. xx). An example of digital intimate publics as learning spaces is evident in recent findings from a study conducted by Naezer (2018). Outlining the activities engaged in by the young people in her study, Naezer (2018) referred to the actions taken by young people as they explore their intimate lives online as “adventures” (p. 725) where moments of learning occurred. She argued that online adventures occurred in the spaces between risk and safety where participation generated experiences on a continuum between pleasant and unpleasant. For young people the acknowledgement that learning is taking place within digital intimate publics creates space for explorations of new and various forms of intimate attachment that may or may not be desired or even continue for any length of time.

The work of generating experiences of digital intimacy involves learning and growth. Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018) argued that digital intimate publics legitimise “intimacies that are not fully realised, not captured by form or discourse, not overdetermined with normative meaning” (p. 8). Understanding SMP as digital intimate publics disrupts the powerful hold that normative expectations have over intimate digital behaviours. Disrupting expectations of normative intimate expression makes space for non-dominant or non-mainstream peoples and their unique forms of intimacy and intimate expression to emerge. Outside the sense of belonging established in the intimate publics that form in digital environments, so called excessive forms of intimacy often mark individuals as marginalised peoples and non-normative behaviours as queer intimate behaviours. To this end, the concept of digital intimate publics recognises that certain

experiences represent forms of value through the emotions and feelings produced by the social and personal labour of engaging in digital intimacy (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018).

Digital intimate publics form as individuals are using their energy and labour to explore intimacy. Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018) argued that “the intimate labour of care and of producing and maintaining shared feelings, affects, and intimate and social relations become *more* productive under conditions of digital capitalism” (p. 16 emphasis in original). They argued, these forms of intimate labour can produce commercial, social and personal measures of value. The labour of digital intimacy is also forming intimate attachments and directing intimate forms of behaviour. Therefore, digital intimate practices can direct intimacy through algorithmic programs that promote certain kinds of intimate behaviours through promotion of likes, shares, traffic and other forms of digital practice. The impact that types of social and emotional labour have on the formation of digital intimacy is important because it provides ways to explore the behavioural practices, social conventions and personal rules that generate experiences of intimacy (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). These behavioural practices of digital intimacy evolved through the social and emotional labour of engaging in digital intimate publics. Therefore, the enactment of these practices can be seen to inform and affect the intimate experiences of the young people age 11-14 in this study. Combined with the concept of the queer child growing sideways, the concept of digital intimate publics provided conceptual ideas to analyse and discuss data across Chapters 6 and 7.

In this section, I began by explaining the public and private nature of intimacy and the emerging theory of digital intimate publics (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018) that acknowledges SMP as sites of learning where non-normative or marginalised representations of intimacy flourish. To theorise the emotion and affect generated through engagement in digital intimate publics, I turn to the work of Sarah Ahmed (2004a, 2010a).

3.5 Intimacy, Emotion and Affect

In this section, I explain emotions as relational experiences that move among people and extend outward to include nations and institutional entities. I undertake an examination of several concepts from Ahmed (2004a; 2010a) to explain how the feelings associated with emotion stick to some bodies while they slide over others.

3.5.1 Sticky emotions. Drawing on psychoanalysis, Marxism and queer theory, Ahmed (2004a) conceptualised emotions as experiences that bind things together. Ahmed (2004a) argued for an understanding of emotion that recognised how they work in “concrete and particular ways, to mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective” (p. 119). Through this framing, emotions occur as movements that “involve subjects and objects” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 119) without being an innate part of either one of them. Ahmed (2004a) described emotions as moving “sideways (through “sticky” associations between signs, figures, and objects) as well as backward (repression always leaves its trace in the present—hence “what sticks” is also bound up with the “absent presence” of historicity)” (p. 120). Ahmed’s (2004a) theorisation of emotion resists the normative notion that emotion originates within one body or another. Instead, she argued that individuals move toward and away from objects in relation to how a given interaction affects them (Ahmed (2010a). These movements, sideways, backwards and other ways, create intensities that generate emotion and affect. The intensities generated through various movements produce emotional value that sticks to individuals and social groups.

Understood as binding things and people together, Ahmed (2004a, 2004b, 2010a) conceptualised emotions as “sticky” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 120). Using examples from a discussion about indigenous Australians and international terrorism, she argued that emotion involves both “subjects and objects” without “residing positively” in either one (Ahmed, 2004a p. 119). Through a conceptualisation arguing for the “nonresidence of emotion” (p.119), Ahmed (2004a)

argued emotions stick to some bodies and move away from others. The alignment of emotions with some bodies and not others works to generate personal, social and political capital that generates power. Therefore, emotions generate power circulated by movement of feelings among individuals or groups. Emotional alignments are created when emotions move and generate attachments amongst certain bodies and certain social worlds (Ahmed, 2004a). Sticky emotional alignments are significant because they reproduce and extend emotional affect beyond individuals into individual histories and wider social worlds. Through the “mediating work of alignment” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 129) emotions, that move and stick among subjects and objects, become lived experiences that remain fixed in the attachment to a given emotional state, idea or feeling. The concept of “sticky” emotions (Ahmed, 2010a p.29) is helpful to explore the intimate experiences of young people because their narratives and reflections on intimacy contain rich accounts of their feelings and the emotional affect these feelings produced as they moved between individuals and through their digital social worlds.

3.5.2 Affective economies. Emotions affect subjects and objects, generating certain forms of value. Ahmed (2004a) referred to the value associated with emotion as an “affective economy” (p. 121). Through the allocation of value, social and personal capital is associated with emotions that move between and then stick to other subjects. As such, the “affective economies” of emotion are recognised as “social and material, as well as psychic” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121). Emotional affect shapes and forms “the surface of bodies and worlds” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121), and emotions affect experiences of intimacy. The concept of sticky emotions is therefore a helpful tool to explore the way emotions affect the intimate experiences of the young people involved in this study.

Emotional experiences are subjective experiences. The affect and value of particular emotions differ depending on how the experience is qualified, judged or understood by the affected subject (Ahmed, 2010a). For Ahmed (2004a, 2010a), emotions are also understood as

socially constructed through feelings that move, gather intensity and generate affect through circulation. Emotion generates affect not only from engagement with the object but also from “whatever is around the object, which includes what is behind the object, the conditions of its arrival” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 33). When conceptualised as moving and sticky, emotions generate and reproduce affect that sticks to people, situations or ideas. Ahmed (2010a) argued that “affect is what sticks, or what sustains or preserves that connection between ideas, values and objects” (p. 29). The stickiness of emotional affect produces value attributed to certain bodies, ideas, things or phenomenon. Through an exploration of happiness, Ahmed (2010a) articulated that the connections that stick, tend to stick to emotional experiences described in terms of “bad feelings” or “good feelings” (p. 30). The individual experience of these feelings, illustrate the subjective nature of emotional experiences that stick to some bodies and not to others.

Over the past decade, Ahmed’s (2004a, 2010a) conceptualisation of emotion and affect has been used by a number of scholars in a range of educational and social research contexts. In a recent example, Neary, Gray, and O’Sullivan (2016) reimagined the relationship between sexualities and school spaces. They used the concept of emotion and affect to trouble the “rhetoric of equality, inclusion and progressive change [that] leaves heterosexuality and its privileges largely uninterrupted” (Neary et al., 2016, p. 251) across a range of schooling environments. In an Australian context, Wolfe (2015) explored experiences of schooling that engaged with emotion and affect to unpack narratives of shame in young women’s experiences of schooling. Duggan and Muñoz (2009) drew on Ahmed’s (2004a, 2010a) thinking around happiness and emotion to discuss and trouble public feelings of hope and hopelessness within the American context. They advocated for a sideways move that recognises a notion of “educative hope” (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009, p. 280) that straddled the normative notion of hope and a non-normative notion of hopelessness. Duggan and Muñoz (2009) drew on concepts from Stockton (2009) and Ahmed (2004a, 2004b, 2010a) to explore alternative, different or sideways explorations of being political and feeling revolutionary. The studies conducted by Neary et al.

(2016), Wolfe (2015), Duggan and Muñoz (2009) offer examples of three different ways scholars have explored how emotions move among people, places and nations using Ahmed's (2004a, 2010a) concept of emotion and affect.

In the final data analysis chapter, Chapter 8, I use the concept of sticky emotions to analyse three participants' data, to consider how challenging emotions remain attached to the narratives of their intimate experiences. During this analysis, I consider how the effect of a range of emotions facilitated sideways growth through expressions of confusion, disappointment frustration and anger. In the final data chapter, I bring together the concepts of the queer child growing sideways and the affective economies of sticky emotions to consider how challenging emotions facilitated experiences of intimacy and sideways growth for three participants (Ahmed, 2004a; Stockton, 2009).

In this section, I have outlined Ahmed's (2004a, 2004b, 2010a) concept of sticky emotions and explained how I will analyse data exploring emotions associated with intimate experiences. I briefly mentioned several studies that engaged with the concept of sticky emotions and outlined one study that brought the notion of emotion and affect together with the concept of the queer child growing sideways (Duggan & Muñoz, 2009).

3.6 Conceptual Framework for Data Analysis

In the final section of this chapter, I briefly explain how I used these concepts to analyse and discuss data in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

The concept, of the queer child growing sideways (Stockton, 2009) is the key idea used to work with the data from films generated by the 10 young people in this study. In Chapter 6, I engage with the concept of the child queered by innocence (Stockton, 2009) to theorise how the participants grew sideways as they explored their intimate lives across a range of digital locations. In Chapter 7, I engage with the notion of the queer child and sideways growth to explore how participants navigated their way through behavioural practices, personal rules and

social conventions enacted online. Finally, in Chapter 8, I consider how the emotional effect generated through engagement in intimate experiences offered opportunities for three young people aged 11-14 to grow sideways through the stickiness of uncomfortable emotions. Together, the insights gained from exploring these three aspects of the participants' experiences of intimacy demonstrate how young people normatively queered by innocence used digital environments to grow sideways through delay.

In two of three data discussion chapters, digital intimate public (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018) is a concept used in conjunction with the concept of the queer child growing sideways (Stockton, 2009). In Chapter 6, I use the concept of digital intimate publics to theorise digital locations as learning spaces where intimacy formed. In Chapter 7, I consider the behavioural practices and personal rules through this concept to explore the intimate experiences discussed by the participants. The concept of digital intimate publics challenges normative and gendered notions of what constitutes intimacy and illuminates the many ways that intimate attachments manifest within digital environments. Digital intimate publics, conceptualised as learning spaces, are digital locations where marginalised peoples and groups explore new forms of intimacy while also (re)creating and (re)forming known forms of intimacy and intimate practices. Through these discussions, I demonstrate how the digital intimate publics that form in SMP provided the participants with experimental spaces where they learned about intimacy as they grew sideways through periods of managed delay (Stockton, 2009).

In the final data discussion conducted in Chapter 8, I engage with Ahmed's (2004a) concept of sticky emotions to consider how emotion effected three participants' experiences of intimacy. The concept of sticky emotions is a concept used in conjunction with Stockton's (2009) queer child growing sideways. In the final data chapter, I outline how digital locations afforded participants opportunities to explore emotions and generate intimate experiences in ways that FTF or *in person* contact did not. I examine how the emotions of confusion, disappointment,

frustration and anger effected several participants and explore how these emotions remained attached to their experiences of intimacy. The emotions expressed in the data discussed in Chapter 8 offer insights into the many ways that exploring intimacy within digital intimate publics effected three young people's experiences of intimacy and generated opportunities for sideways growth.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter began with an explanation of the after queer approach that directed this study. I then outlined the three theoretical concepts, the queer child growing sideways, digital intimate publics and sticky emotions used to analyse data across three chapters. I discussed in detail the concept of the child queered by innocence, the notion of sideways growth and the normative notion of delay (Stockton, 2009). Next, I explained the concept of digital intimate publics as intimate public spaces where marginalised people come together to share intimacy. I argue that digital intimate public can offer young people self-directed learning practices and opportunities to explore their intimate lives outside the rules of normative notions of intimacy (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). Finally, through a discussion of sticky emotions, I outlined how emotions move among objects and subjects to produce experiences of intimacy. Next in Chapter 4, I turn to a discussion of methodology and explain the methods of data generation and analysis used in this study.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

As explained in Chapter 3, I used emancipatory ideas from queer theory to conceptualise young people and intimacy across all aspects of this study. In this chapter, I explain a subjunctive methodology following the work of Talburt (2010) and describe the short-term ethnographic approach that facilitated data generation through four methods. These methods included, observations (Kehily, 2015), creative filmmaking (Ivinson & Renold, 2016), video elicitation interviews (Allen, 2011) and a one on one interview (Creswell, 2014). Four different methods established the credibility of findings obtained through multiple sources. Of these four methods, creative filmmaking provided the most significant data set because it captured the voices of 10 young people in the 13 different short films produced using everyday digital devices. In Section 4.7, I describe data produced and discuss the analysis methods. This discussion includes an explanation of the initial diffractive analysis (Taguchi & Palmer, 2013) of all data, and an additional thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014) of the data captured in short films. To conclude, I offer a brief discussion of the methodological limitations encountered during this study.

4.2 A Subjunctive Methodology

A study framed through after queer theory (Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010) lends itself to a methodological approach that is constantly evolving and receptive to change. A subjunctive methodology offers queer researchers an approach that welcomes fluidity and uncertainty into the research process, and resists the necessity to seek or identify certain markers like sexuality, gender or existing classifications of intersecting disadvantage. Talburt (2010) argued that a subjunctive methodology seeks to “complicate linear understandings of youth, sexuality, development and education” (p. 49). Furthermore, a subjunctive methodology seeks to open up

spaces where new forms, new methods, and new possibilities of research are considered. A subjunctive methodology does not seek truth in data, nor does it strive for the certainty of knowing exactly what will happen during the research process. Most importantly, it does not seek certainty about what the research process will produce (Kehily, 2015; Talburt, 2010). A subjunctive methodology therefore offers a way to consider research exploring intimacy, sexuality, young people and their experiences differently. A methodology that encourages researchers to see things differently complements the use of the concept of the queer child and the notion of sideways growth. Furthermore, the unpredictable nature of a subjunctive methodology is a helpful frame to engage in research through a short-term ethnographic approach that emerged from elements of traditional ethnography.

Traditional ethnographic approaches have been used across disciplines to describe, analyse and interpret patterns of behaviour or thinking shared by a cultural group (Creswell, 2014). Used within sex education research, Kehily (2015) described “ethnography as a way of generating insights into the processes of schooling” (p. 685). Kehily (2015) asserted that ethnography positions participants as “expert commentators and interpreters of their own lives” (p. 686). She also argued that the seemingly ordinary aspects of young people’s lives are valued in an ethnographic study, and thus, they are recognised as significant. The focus on the ordinary has enabled ethnographers to describe what is occurring at research sites rather than making meaning about what is observed (Fields, 2008; Kehily, 2015). Although ethnographic studies have a long history exploring sexuality in educational settings (Kehily, 2015) in recent studies a number of factors have made traditional long form ethnographic practices difficult to undertake (Ivinson & Renold, 2016; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Robards, 2017).

Ethnographic approaches to research are evolving. In response to time pressure, restrictions on site visits and a desire to facilitate an embodied research experience, a number of scholars have experimented with creative participant-led ethnographic approaches over shorter

timeframes (Hendry, 2016; Ivinson & Renold, 2016; Pink & Morgan, 2013; Renold & Ringrose, 2016). One approach, short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013) draws on principles from traditional and other hybrid forms of ethnography. Pink and Morgan (2013) argued that short term ethnography evolved from thinking with ideas from “rapid ethnography”, “focused ethnographies” and visual and sensory ethnography (p. 352). In the next section, I describe a short-term ethnographic approach (Pink, 2013; Pink & Morgan, 2013). In this discussion, I explain how a subjunctive methodology supported a study framed by an evolving form of queer theory. I argued that after queer theory and a subjunctive methodology seeks to explore ideas rather than explain findings against pre-existing ideas of sexuality, gender or other intersecting classifications by which people are marginalised and othered.

4.3 Short-Term Ethnography

Short-term ethnography differs from traditional ethnography in several ways. Firstly, the time taken to conduct research is much shorter than a traditional ethnographic approach. Secondly, the participant researcher has a more active role in the process. Thirdly, data are generated using modern technology. Finally, short-term ethnography recognises and anticipates that theory will evolve and change throughout the research process (Pink & Morgan, 2013). Although the time spent in the field is significantly shorter than traditional ethnographic fieldwork, an intense level of participation continues through extended engagement with digitally recorded visual data across longer timeframes. Through these differences, short-term ethnography engages with traditional ethnographic techniques in new and experimental ways.

According to Pink and Morgan (2013), short-term ethnography offers a more contemporary way of creating “intensity, empathy and an ongoing ethnographic-analytical-theoretical dialog” (p. 353). This intensity is developed through participation and creative activities where actions, words and “the nonrepresentational”, sensory and tacit aspects of everyday life are considered (Pink & Morgan, 2013, p. 353). These nonrepresentational aspects

of everyday life can be recognised in the ordinary details observed or captured in data.

Furthermore, they can also be understood when the researcher's experience of the phenomenon combines with the participants' experience to generate new forms of knowledge. In the next section, I explain the four key qualities of a short-term ethnographic approach.

4.3.1 Key qualities of short-term ethnography. A short-term ethnographic approach is a short but intense research experience. Pink and Morgan (2013) argued that short-term ethnography produces a series of intense interventions with the researcher "at the centre of the action, right from the start" (p. 355). They explained this intensity through an account of a "6 week immersion" (p. 355) study exploring health care practices in the UK. They asked participants to perform everyday cleaning tasks in their home so the researcher could "see" (p. 355) and experience the energy and emotion produced through the enactment of everyday practices in the field, and then later through engagement with data captured on film. An extended engagement with the data meant that researchers "focused on trying to understand or imagine" the "embodied practices, sensations or emotions" of their participants' experiences (Pink & Morgan, 2013, p. 356). The practice facilitated a theoretical engagement with day to day activities that generated an intense research encounter where "the unspoken, unsaid, not seen, but sensory, tacit and known elements of everyday life" (Pink & Morgan, 2013, p. 353) could be explored. Participation in a short but intense research process can thus generate an embodied and empathetic experience for participants and researchers alike.

A short-term ethnographic approach requires an intense focus on the details of day-to-day life. Pink and Morgan (2013) described the second quality of short-term ethnography as "a focus on the detail" (p. 356). Focussing in on the detail of data, extends the possibility of gaining knowledge from sensory and embodied understandings of the culture-sharing group and their practices (Pink & Morgan, 2013; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Robards, 2017). In an Australian study, Vorobjovas-Pinta and Robards (2017) explored the everyday lives of gay tourists in Queensland,

through understandings “constructed through the interaction and relationship between the deeply embedded researcher and people representing a particular social group” (p. 374). Details from this study when considered in relation to Pink and Morgan’s (2013) account, indicate that intensity in the research process is established by paying close attention to the details of the participants’ experiences. In addition, the intensity is further developed when the researcher is open to connect their own experiences, memories or understandings of the situation with those of the participants. Through participation and the intensity of the research process, a combined experience can generate moments of learning, new understandings and experiences of empathy for both participants and researchers (Pink & Morgan, 2013).

The third quality of a short-term ethnographic approach is a recognition that theoretical frameworks evolve throughout the research process (Pink & Morgan, 2013). Pink and Morgan (2013) described this form of evolving theory as one that “involves continually bringing theoretical questions into dialogue” (p. 357) during the research process. Short-term ethnography invites researchers to work with “theoretical turns” (Pink & Morgan, 2013, p. 533) that recognise the effect of the unspoken in data such as a look, a pause, or a silence. The unspoken elements can be powerful instigators of knowledge production within research encounters. This third quality requires flexible thinking on the part of the researcher, because questions arise through scholarly discussions with participants, observations and reflection on the research process. The kinds of questions raised as the research process evolves often stretch and challenge the parameters of the original theoretical framework. This process differs from research using grounded theory as the flexibility emerges from an existing theoretical framework rather than theory emerging from the data (Creswell, 2014). Therefore, this understanding of theory works comfortably within research framed through after queer thinking and a subjunctive methodology (Talbut, 2010). Theoretical shifts are welcomed within queer research, because queer theory facilitates the “fluidity and diversity” that Browne and Nash (2016, p. 3) argued is characteristic of non-normative approaches to research.

The fourth quality of short-term ethnography is a focus on contemporary data generation methods using digital media (Pink & Morgan, 2013). According to Pink and Morgan (2013), visual and digital processes facilitate and extend the liveliness of data well beyond the field work phase. They argued that audio and video methods stretch ethnographic places beyond the locational field to ensure the researcher's ongoing involvement with the data continues across time. This involvement can include engagement through digitally recorded artefacts, academic and scholarly discussions, and written arguments that involve the researcher in the project for periods "potentially lasting years" (Pink & Morgan, 2013, p. 355). Consequently, in a short-term ethnographic approach, research environments are conceptualised as more than places with geographical locations. Pink and Morgan (2013) argued that using contemporary digital research methods can facilitate engagement with data over time, and they "see reviewing material as an ongoing form of re-engagement with the materials and the context" from the original research site (p. 358). Extending this idea further, Pink and Morgan (2013) argued that when researchers tap into their lived experience while reviewing data, they have the capacity to understand the data in new ways with each encounter.

A short-term ethnographic approach was appropriate for this study because it provided a framework that supported the practical and theoretical intentions of the research. Most importantly, the key qualities of a short-term ethnographic approach supported the creative filmmaking method (discussed in Section 4.6.2) used to generate data in short films. One of the key ways short-term ethnography supported a creative filmmaking method was that it recognised a shorter time was necessary to minimise disruption to usual classes or work practices. This was an important consideration as the class time allocated to the study was time usually used to teach other areas of the curriculum. Finally, the use of digital devices as data production tools was an essential part of the creative filmmaking method. This aspect of the study design aligns with one of the key qualities of a short-term ethnographic approach that favours the use of modern technologies and visual methods. For these key reasons, short-term ethnography was the most

appropriate approach to enact a subjunctive methodology framed through after queer theory (Talburt, 2010).

In this section, I have described the four key qualities of short-term ethnography. These qualities include a short but intense engagement with participants, a focus on the details, an evolving theoretical approach and the use of contemporary data generation practices. This approach necessitated a detailed ethics application discussed in the next section.

4.4 Ethics

This study was considered high-risk research by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC) due to the involvement of participants under the age of 18. The ethical issues associated with conducting sexuality research in school environments have been well documented by scholars working in both Australian and international contexts (Allen, 2015a). Therefore, before seeking ethical approval, I spent considerable time thinking about the intention of the study and ways to avoid replicating the difficulties experienced in the past and encountered by sexuality researchers (Allen et al., 2014). Working with an after queer theoretical framing (Talburt & Rasmussen, 2010), and a desire to reduce the ethical dilemmas that often accompany sexuality research in schools, I concluded that a focus on intimacy rather than sexuality would expand the scope of the study and address the gap identified in the literature review (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.1). Through an expanded scope that included all forms of intimacy, and with the use of less contentious language, the difficulties experienced by many researchers of sexuality in the past were avoided. The decision to research ideas about intimate experiences rather than sexual relationships marks this study as different from other sexuality research conducted in schools (Allen, 2013b, 2015b; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Quinlivan, 2014).

Developing the ethics application was a generative process that enabled this study to make a unique contribution to the field of education research because it explored a broader notion

of young people's experiences of intimacy rather than focusing on their experiences of sexuality or sex education. However, several issues were difficult to navigate especially privacy and the common practice of requiring young people to assent to identity anonymisation in research using visual methods. Research involving young people and digital technology makes anonymity difficult to enforce and potentially undesirable (MacEntee & Flicker, 2018). Even though several scholars have questioned the ethics of enforcing anonymity on young people participating in sexuality research (Allen, 2015a; MacEntee & Flicker, 2018), image and identity anonymisation was common and expected in 2015, when I applied for ethical approval to conduct the study.

In the past, identity anonymisation was common practice and generally mandated when ethics approval was granted for sexuality researchers working with young people in schools (Allen, 2015a). However, in an exploration of the issue of anonymisation, a process designed to protect young people from risk, Allen (2015a) listed a number of ways that the anonymisation process itself created inequity and potential harm to the participants it was designed to protect. The issues she identified included; objectification of bodies depicted without heads; distortion of faces and misrepresentation of meaning when faces were removed or pixilated (Allen, 2015a). In order to avoid replicating these forms of inequity and the possibility of misrepresentation, I successfully challenged the requirement that participants under the age of 18 must be anonymous in research using visual or video recorded research data.

My challenge to this common ethical requirement succeeded after consulting the privacy and copyright officers at Monash University. Arguments presented to the ethics committee, after seeking advice from Monash University's copyright lawyers, indicated that participants, regardless of their age, owned any data they produced through self-generated creative research practices. These discussions also highlighted that research participants, who created self-generated data, had the legal right to show their faces in their work if they chose to. After I received permission to waive anonymity from MUHREC, I informed participants that they could

show their faces in their films if they chose to. However, in line with MacEntee and Flicker's (2018) process of “maintaining participant confidentiality”, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants. These pseudonyms reduced the risk of the social or emotional harm that could potentially position participants or the individuals they discussed in their data in a vulnerable or undesired situation in the future. Due to the intimate nature of the data generated through the creative filmmaking method, all participants discussed in this thesis have been de identified by pseudonyms allocated to them from a list obtained from an online website of the most popular names of 2016.

I conducted this research after obtaining multiple levels of ethical approval. MUHREC granted approval to conduct the research on 11/11/2015, with a project approval number of CF15/338-2015001441 (See Appendix A). Following the MUHREC approval, I lodged an ethics application with the Department of Education and Training (DET), Strategy and Review Group, Insights and Evidence Branch. The DET ethics process took three months, with approval granted in February 2016. After DET approval, I resumed a series of meetings with both the principal and DET school health nurse at the school site. (The initial contact and earlier meeting discussions are explained in Section 4.4.2.) In the meetings conducted after ethics approval, I outlined the intention of the study and the data generation methods. Subsequently, the school principal formally granted permission for students from two classes, Year 7 and Year 8, to participate in the study (See Appendix B for letter to the principal). In accordance with a requirement of the DET ethics approval, I then informed the Regional Director of Schools about the research.

The final aspect of the ethical approval process involved providing potential participants and their parents, with a plain language or explanatory statement and consent forms to participate in the study. All of the 25 students in each of the two classes (50 in total) were invited to participate in the research and were given the plain language statement. This statement outlined the intention of the research, the research process and the possible ways data might be discussed

in future publications. These statements accompanied the consent and assent forms that parents and students, who self-selected to participate in the research, then signed and returned to a box located on the counter of the school office. Finally, the DET school health nurse signed a consent form agreeing to engage in the research and to discuss the experience of the process in a videoed interview at the conclusion of the fieldwork phase. Examples of these explanatory statements and the consent and assent forms are in Appendix D and E. Finally, in accordance with the University's research and ethics policy, a full risk assessment was undertaken. This document can be seen in Appendix C. In the next section, I explain in detail how I selected the research site before briefly introducing the participants. (A more detailed contextual profile of all participants is offered in Chapter 5).

4.5 Research Site and Participants

In this section, I begin by outlining how the idea for the study emerged before I describe the process undertaken to select the research site. I then detail the demographic characteristics of the school involved in the study. I conclude this section with a brief explanation of the three participant groups.

4.5.1 Background to the research. As mentioned in Chapter 1, I began thinking about this research while working as a casual relief teacher at a school in Melbourne, Australia. One day as I was teaching a Year 7 class, I overheard several boys talking and laughing about what they would do to a girl if she would not have sex with them. After hearing them say they would "rape her" if she did not want to have sex, I told the boys I would speak to them after class. I wanted to know how it was that young men might think this was an acceptable thing to say and why they made this statement. During the ensuing discussion, the young men informed me that their knowledge of relationships and sexual practices came from online pornography. The most shocking thing one young man said during this discussion was that he thought that rape was what

girls liked! After this classroom experience, I began to wonder how young people were learning about sexuality and various forms of intimacy as they explored their intimate lives online.

As part of some independent, early exploration of young people and their understanding of sexuality, I talked to a variety of people working with young people in schools and social service contexts. In these discussions, I spoke with professionals from the fields of education and social work in an attempt to understand how they thought digital environments, and in particular, pornography might be influencing young people's views and experiences of intimacy, sex and relationships. Through this process, I met a school principal looking for ways to work with pupils sending sexualised messages via SMP. After several discussions with the principal about this issue, I was invited to attend a training session designed to educate teaching staff about young people and sexualised digital message sending. In this training session, police, DET regional office staff, legal aid officers and South Eastern Centre Against Sexual Assault (SECASA) staff discussed the legal, social and health implications of young people exploring sexual relationships through social media, sexting and pornography.

At the time of this training session extensive media coverage had sparked a moral and media panic about the online sexualised behaviours of young people in the popular press (Rosewarne, 2015, March 16; Stark, 2014). The training session was responding to public concern and the needs of education staff who were dealing with the many problems associated with online-sexualised behaviour among the student populations in their schools. Although the training session was well organised and addressed the issues from a harm minimisation perspective, the voices of young people were completely missing from the conversation. Attending this training session motivated me to undertake PhD research to try to understand how young people were experiencing intimacy through their explorations in digital environments. After deciding to undertake research by enrolling in a PhD and gaining ethical approval from

Monash University, I approached the same principal, who then formally granted permission to conduct research at the school site.

4.5.2 The research site and participant selection. To understand the demographic details of the school population where the research was conducted, I undertook an examination of the school's public profile via the My school website (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2015). In late 2015, the My School website described the research site as a school "embarking on an improvement journey" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2015). The narrative of this improvement journey addressed issues associated with the school's status as a "low socio-economic environment [...] with a record of underperformance in comparison to other schools with similar backgrounds" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2015). In 2015, ACARA reported that 856 students attended the school where the research occurred. At that time, the statistical information indicated that the school's Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) value was 956. The ICSEA value of the school population indicated that students attending the research site came from families that had a lower ICSEA value than the national average of 1000 at the time data were produced.

Data obtained from the My School website identified that the research site was socially and academically disadvantaged. Gannon, Hattam, and Sawyer (2018) argued recently that within the field of education research there is an urgent need to focus on "educational sites serving vulnerable communities" (p. 1). They argued that disadvantaged school communities are often serving individuals who are "caught in a mesh of intersecting and compounding disadvantage" (Gannon et al., 2018, p. 1). An understanding of the detailed statistics from the My School website (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2015) indicated that the research site was a vulnerable public school with students experiencing disadvantage in multiple areas of their lives.

The disadvantaged nature of the school population was documented in the ACARA data indicating that on an income distribution level, the school's ICSEA value of 956 translated into almost half of the school's population self-reporting their income in the ICSEA bottom quarter (48%) and another 31% reporting in the lower middle quarter. The remaining families reported their ICSEA value as 18% in the upper middle quarter and 4% in the top quarter. The ICSEA information indicated that 78% of students attending this school experienced social and educational disadvantage as students from low-income families. The only ethnic or cultural information offered on the My schools website indicated that 10% of the school's population had a language background other than English, and that 3% of the enrolled students identified as indigenous people (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2015). Through the observation period, I understood that the Pacific Islands, Anglo Celtic Australians, and Northern European or Italian heritage were the ethnic and cultural backgrounds represented across the 10 participating students. These income and cultural details highlight several interconnecting layers of disadvantage that translated into academic "underperformance" and the need for "literacy support across all college programs" (Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority (ACARA), 2015). Given these issues, it was essential to develop a research approach that enabled participants to explore and express their experiences of intimacy using methods that did not extend their already disadvantaged position. Through a creative and visual research approach I aimed to offer these young people the opportunity to discuss and describe their intimate lives through creative filmmaking as a way to "disrupt [existing] ways of thinking" (Gannon et al. 2018 p.2) about how young people under the age of 15 and who attended a disadvantaged school experienced intimacy.

The practical creative filmmaking process follows the work of Ivinson and Renold, (2016, 2018) who used creative methods to work with disadvantaged young women in ex-coal mining towns in South Wales, UK. The creative methods employed in Ivinson and Renold's (2016) study enabled them to work in "open ended ways [...] to be sensitive to 'vulnerable' young people's

expressed and nascent desires” (p. 170). The self-generated creative filmmaking method (outlined in Section 4.6.2) enabled the young people who participated in this study to express themselves without the need for high levels of literacy or demonstrations of written academic competency. Most importantly, the creative filmmaking method was a self-directed and autonomous process that enabled participants to direct data generation in ways that suited them rather than the adult researcher. Given these demographic details, it was essential to ensure that the research process was fair and equitable for any participant regardless of their academic or economic capacity.

As discussed previously, my initial contact with the school occurred because the school had experienced problems dealing with students sending sexual messages online. Through my understanding of the problems at the school relating to the sharing of sexual messages, the school's site represented a research location that Creswell (2014) might have described as a site where “critical sampling” (p. 207) was possible. A critical sample of data is possible when existing and significant examples of a phenomenon can be observed at the research site. The school site was known to have students who were sending sexual messages online. Therefore, these students offered what Creswell (2014) described as “an exceptional case” (p. 207) to explore a critical sample of young people’s experiences of digital intimacy. Through this critical sample, 11 participants volunteered or self-selected to be involved in the study.

Three groups of participants included 10 young people from two classes across two secondary school year levels, and one adult who was the DET school health nurse. These three groups ensured credibility of the data through the experiences of multiple participants. All 10 young people across Year 7 and Year 8 gained consent from their parents and assented to participate in the study. At no time before, during or after the research did any parent express concern or encouragement regarding their child’s participation in the research process. In the first group, four Year 8 participants included three males and one female aged between 13 and 14 years. In the second group, all six participants in the Year 7 class were females aged between 11

and 13. The third and final participant group was a male DET school health nurse aged approximately 40 years. At the time of the study, the DET school health nurse worked across two schools in the area providing sex education to Year 9 students and above. His fun and student-centred approach facilitated an open and honest classroom environment that supported the creative research approach. As the DET staff member in charge of the classroom during the fieldwork phase, the DET school health nurse provided the necessary supervision of all students and co-facilitated the classroom activities associated with the creative filmmaking method discussed in Section 4.6.2. In the next section, I explain the four data generation methods.

4.6 Data Generation Methods

To ensure credibility of research findings, three participant groups produced multiple sources of data using four methods of data generation (Anfara, Brown, & Mangione, 2002). Methods included observations, creative filmmaking, video elicitation interviews and a single one on one interview. From this rich and varied data a complex study of 10 young people's experiences of intimacy was undertaken (Creswell, 2014). As discussed in Section 4.3, data generation methods were conceptualised through a short-term ethnographic approach in which I was an active part of the process (Pink & Morgan, 2013). However, during the active filmmaking stage, I no longer had a central role in the data generation process. Instead, the participating DET school health nurse and I observed from a distance. This distance ensured that student participants directed the creative filmmaking process themselves.

4.6.1 Observation. Observation is a common method used by scholars employing ethnographic principles in either short-term or long form ethnographic research (Fields, 2008; Kehily, 2015; Pink & Morgan, 2013; Vorobjovas-Pinta & Robards, 2017). In this short-term ethnographic approach, I employed a changing observational role. Through participant observations that change from active to passive involvement researchers can gain insight and record information by observing from a distance, and through participation in activities where

research data are produced (Creswell, 2014). To begin, I observed student participants and the DET school health nurse during four 70-minute lessons once a week over four weeks. During this time, I sat at the back of the room while the DET school health nurse taught sex education lessons that focused on biological reproduction and relationships. Drawing insights from the work of scholars of sexuality and ethnographers such as Fields (2008) and Kehily (2015), I undertook initial observations to establish a sense of trust and familiarity with the students. This period of observation provided me with the time and space to understand any specific language or cultural practices that were unique to the research site and the participants.

The initial observation period also ensured that the student participants had time to become familiar with me before I became a participant in the classroom activity phase of the creative filmmaking method. As reported in accounts of ethnographic studies conducted in the United Kingdom by Kehily (2015) and the United States by Fields (2008), young people relate to researchers who, over time, become familiar in the classroom space. Through this familiarisation process researchers can become included in the “hidden curriculum” (Kehily, 2015, p. 692) of informal learning that occurs during scheduled lessons. In one example of the trust that develops between researchers and young people, Kehily (2015) reported that a student participant addressed her directly saying “Naomi is having boy trouble” (p. 694). Similarly, over the course of my initial observation period, moments of trust developed between me and the students. In one example, a non – participating student approached me to inform me that two students in the class were dating. Through these moments of interaction with the young people at the research site, I understood that trust was developing between me, non-participating students, and student participants. The data generated through observations have informed the contextual profiles presented in Chapter 5, facilitated my understanding of the tacit aspects of participants’ day to day lives, and illuminated the embodied nature of the short term ethnographic process (Pink & Morgan, 2013).

4.6.2 Creative filmmaking method. The second data generation method was a creative filmmaking method developed specifically for this study. The creative filmmaking method had two distinct steps. The first step was classroom-based activities. This step established a context for the self-generated creative filmmaking that followed. The second step involved student participants working outside the classroom to construct self-generated short films using everyday digital devices, such as smart phones, mini tablets and the movie making application iMovie®. I begin this discussion with a review of the literature that informed the establishment of the creative filmmaking method. The application and documentation of this creative filmmaking method is a contribution to knowledge offering a new way of working with young people and every day digital devices to generate data about their lived experiences of intimacy.

4.6.2.1 A review of the literature. Quantitative surveys undertaken through online questionnaires, dominate research used to inform media debates about the intimate and digital practices of young people (Fisher et al., 2019; Mitchell et al., 2014; Parker, 2014). By contrast, a number of sexuality and identity researchers have undertaken qualitative studies using research methods that engage young people in self-generated and creative ways (Allen, 2009, 2013b; Ivinson & Renold, 2016; Ollis et al., 2019; Renold, 2018). From the discipline of media and cultural studies, Albury (2014) argued that a “more student-centred perspective” (p. 176) offers a way for all involved in the research process to extend their knowledge. In relation to pornography, she argued that an understanding of how young people read pornography could “reshape the broader curriculum of formal sex and relationship education” (Albury, 2014, p. 178). Similarly, in research into sexuality education in schools, Allen (2009) argued that student directed visual approaches enabled researchers to “prioritise young people’s perspectives” (p. 550) within the research process.

Visual methods that give young people control over data production, recognise that participants are central agents in the research practice, and therefore they have the greatest

understanding of the social phenomenon under enquiry. Across various research foci, scholars have used participatory methods that involved visual and audio recording of data. For example, MacEntee and Flicker (2018) analysed the use of “participatory visual methodologies (PVMs)” (p.352) in their explanation of research practices exploring youth sexuality. In their discussion of PVMs they highlighted the benefits of using methods that engaged young people in “digital story telling” (MacEntee & Flicker, 2018, p. 359) and the construction of “cellphilms” (MacEntee & Flicker, 2018, p. 360). Similarly, Gannon and Naidoo (2019) used “creative arts based methods” (p. 2) to engage participants in creating research artefacts to understand the aspirational futures of young women from a school with higher education take up rates that were lower than average. They argued that arts based methods offered them insight into how the participants might be “thinking and feeling” (Gannon & Naidoo, 2019, p. 2) about the research focus in the moment of producing data. Furthermore, visual research methods that use every day digital devices enable young people to select the stories they want to tell and to decide how their stories as data are presented (Gannon & Naidoo, 2019). The recent work of Ollis et al. (2019) and Quinlivan (2018d) also advocated for forms of sexuality education and sexuality research that involved young people in pedagogical practices directed by their own desire to explore and understand their lived experiences of intimacy and sexuality.

In several recent studies exploring the intimate and digital lives of young people, scholars have chosen to use participant-led and creative approaches to generate data (Hendry, 2016; Renold, 2018; Renold & Ringrose, 2016). Hendry (2016) used creative methods in the form of performance “workshops” (p. 513) to explore the concept of “social media bodies” (p. 513) with young people aged 13-18 accessing hospital and alternative school based youth mental health services. Using dress ups, movement and dramatic techniques 10-30 participants articulated the many diverse ways that social media “enhanced and hindered” (Hendry, 2016, p. 514) their experiences of relationships and sense of well-being, through research practices where they

staged their bodies in particular ways. Allen's (2013b) exploration of the sexual culture of schools is another example of how creative methods have been used to work with young people. In her study, 22 participants in Years 12 and 13 at a New Zealand school produced photographic images using disposable cameras. These images demonstrated that much sexual learning occurred outside the formal sexuality classroom environment. The images also identified the "ever-present [...] yet simultaneously invisible and unremarkable" (Allen, 2013b, p. 5) material reality of the mobile phone in young people's intimate lives. Using creative filmmaking, Ivinson and Renold (2016, 2018) took the research process outside into parkland to encourage young women to explore issues of movement and identity through the construction of short films. Ivinson and Renold (2016) worked with seven young women aged 14-15, to explore how feeling unsafe contained their developing bodies and controlled their movements as they proceeded through public open spaces.

Finally, in a recent move toward creative artefact construction as research method, Renold (2018) used what she called "arts based practices" (p. 3) to engage six young women aged 15 years in a range of activities to explore issues of gender and sexual violence in school. During activities conducted over eight weeks in the "informal" space of lunchtimes, participants created data artefacts, or what Renold (2018, p. 38) called "d/artaphacts", by writing comments on a large roll of paper, creating paper chains and making skirts from school rulers strung together. By constructing different d/artaphacts, the participants explored and then represented their experiences of sexual and gendered harassment using everyday materials associated with school. The process of discussing and constructing these d/artaphacts offered participants opportunities to process their feelings about their lived experiences of sexual harassment in school. Renold (2018) concluded that the creative processes shifted each participant's experiences in ways that were both articulated and unspoken. In her description of the effect of the creative research process, Renold (2018) reported that the d/artaphacts themselves "carried feelings of numbness, emptiness, anger and relief" (p. 47). Ultimately, the participants used the d/artaphacts to engage

the whole school in a creative and performative assembly where they were invited to “feel, touch, share and become part of a potentially change –making process” (Renold, 2018, p. 49) to stop sexual harassment in school.

Creative and arts based research methods, offer scholars ways of working with young people to explore their lived experiences in self-directed and creative ways. The examples highlighted in this review of the literature illustrate that participant led and self-directed methods of data generation can facilitate a research process where learning occurred through the data production process.

4.6.2.2 Developing the creative filmmaking method. I developed the creative filmmaking method drawing on ideas from scholars using visual methods to work with young people. The creative filmmaking method extends the photo method used by Allen (2009b), and the filmmaking method described by Ivinson and Renold (2016) in a number of ways. Firstly, participants had classroom time and physical space to discuss the ideas and to develop or practice the skills needed to create self-generated films. These practical sessions supported young people to develop the skills and confidence needed to create films as they discussed their experiences of intimacy without interference from the adult researcher or the DET school nurse. Secondly, the creative filmmaking method differed from the visual method employed by Allen (2009), who used portable cameras, and the filmmaking method employed by Ivinson and Renold (2016), who used professional camera equipment, and engaged professional film creatives to work with participants. This study differed from these two studies because the participants used every day digital devices to produce their own films. Everyday digital devices such as mobile phones and mini tablets were already familiar devices that participants used to document and explore their intimate lives. These two differences meant that participants were in control of the way they conveyed their experiences of exploring intimacy and of the data produced through the creative process. Providing student participants with the skills and equipment required to engage

autonomously in the self-generated filmmaking method was an important and deliberate part of this creative data generation method.

The classroom activities (discussed in Section 4.6.2.2) and the filmmaking component of this method were self-directed activities. The thinking behind this process builds on the work of Ivinson and Renold (2016), Renold (2018) and Renold (2002, 2006) who argued that participant led research facilitates an environment where young people can discuss what is most important to them about the phenomenon in focus. In her earlier work, Renold (2002) argued that student-led practices “as far as possible [allow] children themselves to set the agenda and topic for the discussion” (p. 418). More recently, Ivinson and Renold (2016) also demonstrated that when combined with creative visual methods, participant-led research practices can generate new and exciting directions in research that support young people to explore issues that might be invisible to adult researchers. Renold and Ringrose (2016) have also been working with “creative and participatory methods” (p. 632) to engage young women in schools to discuss their experience of gendered violence. The self-directed participant activities described by Renold and Ringrose (2016) occurred during class breaks and were therefore “off-timetable and outside the formal curriculum” (p. 632). Similarly, the creative filmmaking method in this study involved participants in a self-directed creative learning process that differed from existing sexuality and relationship curricula. The most significant difference was that participants were invited to explore their lived experiences of intimacy rather than consider and discuss abstract fictional scenarios (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Gilbert, 2014; Ollis, 2016).

Recording images and experiences on digital devices is common practice for young people, and a growing practice in participatory research with young people (Allen, 2018b; Ivinson & Renold, 2016; Keep, 2014; MacEntee & Flicker, 2018). Keep (2014) argued that images created with everyday digital devices such as phones “form a part of a complex visual language system that has evolved to fit the ever-changing parameters of our increasingly

networked lives” (p. 135). Furthermore, Allen (2013b) has written extensively about the role of the “more-than-human elements (such as mobile phones)” (p. 1), in the sexual development of young people. Her theorising with material and more than human ideas argued for a recognition of the phone as a sexual assemblage through which young people are being and becoming intimate and sexual subjects. The creative filmmaking method builds upon Allen’s (2013b) understanding that the mobile phone is a sexual assemblage, by including other everyday digital devices such as mini tablets and applications like iMovie® in the assemblages of sexuality used to create content and explore intimacy on everyday digital devices.

4.6.2.3 Step 1 creative filmmaking method: Classroom activity. The first step of the creative filmmaking method involved classroom-based activities. These classroom activities involve similar steps in the processes identified as common across the PVMs discussed by MacEntee and Flicker (2018). The details of the PVMs activities discussed are similar to the activities undertaken in this study that included offering participants “a research prompt” and asking them to construct questions or “storyboards” (MacEntee & Flicker, 2018, p. 359) of the ideas they might express on film. In a similar manner, during these initial classroom activities, the DET school health nurse and I facilitated a series of activities across three 70-minute lessons one period per week for three consecutive weeks. During these activities, all students in the class discussed their understanding of intimacy and digital environments and then in the final activity they explored the practical aspects of making films using everyday digital devices.

In the first classroom activity, all members of the class discussed the concept of intimacy through peer conversations and mind mapping activities. During this process, all students and participants engaged in a series of activities facilitated by the DET School Health Nurse and the researcher as a “participant observer” (Creswell, 2014, p. 213). Following one of the key principles of a short-term ethnographic approach, I became a central part of what was occurring in the research site during these classroom activities. A brief outline of the classroom activities is

listed below, while a more detailed plan is located in Appendix F. The classroom process involved the following steps.

- Setting up the classroom environment, discussing rules of participation, instructions not to film peers who were not participants in the study or identifiable school images and explaining student conduct and context.
- Explaining what might occur across the activities.
- Listing words, defining terms such as intimacy and digital locations, discussing ideas around the topic.
- Conversations prompts such as: What do you think/feel/understand or know about intimacy and intimate relationships through your experiences in digital spaces?
- Mind mapping and identifying digital environments and social media platforms where participants explored intimacy.
- Mind mapping and identifying possible kinds of intimacy after a conversation prompt outlining four possible forms of intimacy. The possible kinds of intimacy discussed in the prompt included:
 1. Emotional intimacy – identifying and sharing self-feelings, hopes, dreams.
 2. Intellectual intimacy – sharing and discussing thoughts, ideas, interests.
 3. Social and recreational intimacy – sharing meals, activities, sports.
 4. Sexual intimacy – sharing desires and physical connection with another(Berlant, 1998; Jamieson, 1999, 2013; Rizkalla & Rahav, 2016).
- After initial discussions, all students and participants undertook an activity called the “intimacy scale”(Family Planning Victoria-Safe Landing, 2013, p. 257) instigated by the DET school health nurse using a unit of work from Family Planning Victoria’s “SafeLanding” (Family Planning Victoria-Safe Landing, 2013). In Figure 3, students are

seen touching and moving around the intimacy statements as they engaged in the activity. During the intimacy scale activity, students read and discussed the intimacy statement to establish where they would place certain acts associated with intimacy, on a scale from the most intimate behaviours to the least intimate behaviours. This process generated lively and at times contradictory discussions about intimacy among the participating and non-participating students.



Figure 3. Participants ordering experiences of intimacy from most to least intimate (10/5/16).

- After completing the intimacy scale activity depicted in Figure 3, student pairs engaged in a second activity discussing, selecting and defining questions about intimacy in digital spaces. During this process, all members of the class discussed a range of digital environments and many constructed mind maps to illustrate websites and SNS or SMP where they explored intimacy online. The questions developed through this activity offered participants opportunities to experiment and form ideas to use when they

constructed their films. Participants and other students recorded these ideas in an A4 notebook given to them by the participant researcher.

In the final classroom activity, I explained the fundamentals of digital filmmaking to all members of the class. This lesson involved an explanation of basic filmmaking skills and a practical experimentation with digital devices and the filmmaking application. During this practical aspect of the lesson, the students and participants used their mobile phones or mini tablets provided by the researcher to record and create short film clips using the filmmaking application iMovie®. The practical filmmaking activity involved the following steps:

- A detailed discussion about the basic essentials of filmmaking following an information sheet handed to each student.
- Students and participants using the digital devices to practice making films. This process involved experimenting with the movie making application to record, edit and compile short film clips.

Next, I explain the second and final step in the creative filmmaking method. This aspect of the creative filmmaking method involved participants making self-generated short films that were then collected as data.

4.6.2.4 Step 2 creative filmmaking method: Filmmaking. The second step in the creative filmmaking method involved the production of short films. These films form the data set analysed and discussed most frequently in this thesis. The filmmaking aspect of the creative filmmaking method occurred during five 70-minute lessons conducted over five consecutive weeks. During these five weeks, students worked outside in an area of the school ground close to the classrooms. All students in the class including those participating in the study, had the time and space to discuss, experiment and explore their experiences of intimacy during the process of making their films. Some participants worked with their peers, some in pairs and some on their own. Some of the young people moved around the space and appeared to be playing as they

recorded their footage while others chose to make their film in more secluded nooks and stairwells closer to the classroom building. Although many students created story boards and scripts in the classroom, my observations of the filmmaking process combined with my analysis of data, suggest their films were spontaneous in nature and the content recorded did not reflect the prepared work undertaken earlier in the classroom. During these filmmaking sessions, several participants asked to leave the outdoor area to make films inside their classrooms or inside a small storeroom. Throughout this time, the DET school health nurse and I were present but observed from a distance. The process of overseeing the filmmaking from a distance, offered the participants space and autonomy to experiment, play and engage in conversations as they made their films without having to confer with the researcher or DET school health nurse.

My observational notes of their filmmaking provided powerful insight into the way the creative filmmaking method engaged participants in sharing their experiences with each other and the camera housed inside the digital devices. In addition, my notes support observations made by Ivinson and Renold (2016) that physical movement and being outside in nature had the capacity to create a powerful effect on participants. In this study, creating films outside the classroom resulted in a lively engagement for a number of participants that had not been possible within the confines of the classroom. An excerpt from notes taken after observing participants making films outside recorded the life, energy and possibility that emerged as participants created their films in the outdoor environment.

The year 7s are really enjoying this activity. Reflecting on yesterday's lesson, I recall a number of things. The sun was shining and we were outside. The students worked together in small clusters or groups of three and four. The groups separated into gendered groups. For the first five to 10 minutes of being outside, they were sitting on the picnic tables and seats but then, they began to move around. They seemed cautious of movement initially, but it [freedom of movement] came once they began to move. I could see that they moved

slowly away from their starting point. Before long, their movement became more animated. I heard laughter, I saw them checking footage, holding up the camera and talking into it again. I saw them asking each other – moving from group to group – can we interview you? (Observational notes - filmmaking LE 31/5/16)

These observational notes offer an insight into how the participants slowly adapted to the change of environment and capacity to move freely in the outdoors. Observations also recorded that participants were creating and checking footage as they moved about the space exploring the freedom of being outside, of moving their bodies and of interviewing their peers. During the five weeks of creative filmmaking, the research participants produced 13 films. The small number of films suggests participants deleted footage or films they made during the early weeks of filmmaking. Although few in number, the 13 films offered insightful data documenting the participants' experiences of intimacy. After the completion of the creative filmmaking method, I spent three weeks viewing each short film before returning to the school to conduct video elicitation interviews.

4.6.3 Video elicitation interviews. The final method of data generation with young people occurred through video elicitation interviews. After the creative filmmaking concluded interviews were conducted at the school site in the final weeks of term 2 and the first weeks of term 3, 2016. I developed the video elicitation interview method drawing on the photo-elicitation method outlined by Allen (2011). Allen (2011) argued, students who engaged in research practices using visual methods were more likely to participate in an interview process if they discussed their work before addressing the researcher's questions about the phenomenon in focus. According to Allen (2011), this method also enabled the researcher to check her own understanding of an image or visual artefact against a participant's reading of the same data. This step is important because according to Anfara et al. (2002) "member checking" (p. 30) processes ensure data credibility needed to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research. A final

rationale for undertaking video elicitation interviews was they created an opportunity for both participants and researchers to comment on the research process and express gratitude before all communication ceased.

I conducted video elicitation interviews with only nine of the 10 young people in this study as one female participant in Year 7 left the school before I conducted the interviews. The interviews were recorded on the same digital devices that participants used to create their short films. The length of these interviews ranged from five to 20 minutes. I conducted the majority of these interviews in the Year 8 staff room so that DET teaching staff could see students during the process. Although not mandated in the ethics approval document, I elected to undertake the video elicitation interviews in the staffroom because within a working school environment, it is generally understood that interviews between students and teachers or other adults should not be conducted in locations where there is no third party present. Data generated during these interviews provided valuable insights into the participants' thoughts about their intimate experiences and the usefulness of creative filmmaking as a method to explore intimacy with young people in a school environment. During video elicitation interviews, I asked participants the following five questions.

Video elicitation questions

1. Can you tell me about the scene in your film you like the best and why you like it?
2. Can you tell me about filmmaking as a learning process and whether you think it's a good way to explore ideas around intimate relationships in digital spaces?
3. Can you tell me whether the ideas that you had about intimate relationships and digital spaces have changed in any way through participating in this research process?
4. Can you tell me what you might have learned about intimate relationships and digital spaces through making your own film about intimacy?

5. Was there anything about the learning process that you would change, add or delete?

Data obtained from the video elicitation interviews is briefly discussed in Chapter 5. This data has helped to build contextual profiles of participants, and will be explored further in future publications.

4.6.4 One on one interview. The final data generation method was a single one on one interview with the DET school health nurse. Creswell (2014) explained that a one on one interview is one where the researcher asks questions of one person at a time. Although this can be time consuming, it is an effective method of data collection for participants who are comfortable speaking about the phenomenon in focus. As only one adult participated in this study, the one on one interview method was most suitable. During the interview, the DET school health nurse spoke comfortably about his experience of working with students during the research process and highlighted the benefits of using a creative filmmaking method to explore intimacy with young people. I recorded the interview on one of the digital devices used by the other participants to create their short films. The interview with the DET nurse was the final interview conducted in the study and was undertaken in his office. The following questions guided the interview process.

1. What kinds of issues do you have to deal with that involve students aged 11-14, intimate relationships and digital spaces?
2. What do you think students might understand about intimate relationships as experienced in digital spaces after participating in this active filmmaking process?
3. Can you tell me what you think about filmmaking as a learning process in the health education classroom when the topic is exploring ideas around intimate relationships?
4. Was there anything about the learning process that you would change, add or delete?

In this section, I have explained the four data generation methods. The creative filmmaking method was discussed in detail because the data produced through this method represents data discussed in the three analysis chapters. In addition, the details of the creative filmmaking method offer insights into how creative and participatory methods, using everyday digital devices, can be used to engage young people in research exploring intimacy. In the next section, I briefly report on the data generated through the four methods outlined in Section 4.6.

4.7 Data

Four data sets were produced during fieldwork conducted between Term 1 and Term 3 2016. I begin by summarising data generated in Table 1. Table 1 identifies data collected from participants and the connection to the research questions. In each data column, the letter P identifies data that addressed the primary research questions; how are young people aged 11-14 experiencing intimacy through their explorations in digital environments, and how do young people's digital practices influence their experience of intimacy? The letter S identifies data addressing the secondary research question; how does a self-generated creative filmmaking method support young people aged 11-14 to explore their experiences of intimacy within an educational context?

Table 1

Data by Participants

Participant pseudonym and date	Participant year level () and age	SF-Individual, length, date	SF -Group film, length, date	VEI, length, date	Observations
Sophia SF, 2016.	(8) 12-14	√ 22.37		√ 11.19	√
Sophia VEI, 2016		7/6/16		14/6/16	S
		P&S		P&S	
Jackson VEI, 2016	(8) 12-14		√ √	√ 10.22	√
				14/6/16	S
				P&S	
Jackson & Aiden, SF 2016	(8) 12-14		√ 5.04		√
			7/6/16		S
			P&S		
Aiden VEI, 2016)	(8) 12-14		√	√ 11.51	√
				14/6/16	S
				P&S	
Jackson & Lucas SF, 2016	(8) 12-14		√ 7.32		√
			7/6/16		S
			P&S		
Lucas SF, 2016.	(8) 12-14	√ 1.24	√	√ 8.55	√
Lucas VEI, 2016		7/6/16		28/8/16	S
		P&S		S	
Riley SF, 2016.	(7) 11-13	√ 1.00		√ 7.22	√
Riley VEI, 2016.		√ .41		29/8/16	S
		6/6/16		P&S	
		P&S			
Isabella SF, 2016.	(7) 11-13	√ 1.52	√	√ 7.57	√
Isabella VEI, 2016		6/6/16		29/8/16	S
		P&S		P&S	
Isabella & Mia, SF, 2016	(7) 11-13		√ 3.17		√
			6/6/16		S
			P&S		
Isabella, Mia, Ava, Olivia, Emma, Brian, DET school nurse.	(7) 11-13		√ 4.36		√
	Adult		6/6/16		S
			P&S		
Isabella et al. SF, 2016					
Ava SF, 2016.	(7) 11-13	√ .55	√	√ 6.28	√
Ava VEI, 2016		6/6/16		29/8/16	S
		P&S		S	

Participant pseudonym and date	Participant year level () and age	SF-Individual, length, date	SF -Group film, length, date	VEI, length, date	Observations
Olivia SF, 2016.	(7) 11-13	√ 2.39	√	√ 8.37	√
Olivia VEI, 2016		6/6/16		29/8/16	S
		√ 1.42			
		6/6/16		S	
		P&S			
Emma SF, 2016.	(7) 11-13	√ 2.46	√	√ 6.16	√
Emma, VEI, 2016		6/6/16		29/8/16	S
		P&S		S	
Mia (2016)	(7) 11-13		√		√
					S
Brian, DET school health nurse	Adult participant		√	One on one interview.	√
				√ 29/8/19 S	S

Note. √ Indicate data produced by this participant. SF is an abbreviation for Short Film made during the creative filmmaking method and VEI for data obtained from the Video Elicitation Interviews.

The first data set was observational notes, recording my thoughts and feelings about the research process and my observations of what the participants were doing during the process. The second data set was 13 short films, produced during the creative filmmaking method. Table 1, identifies that seven individual participants created nine of the 13 films, and participants working in pairs (3 films) or a larger group (1) produced four additional films. The third set of data was the transcripts from nine video elicitation interviews recorded at the conclusion of the fieldwork. The final data set was the transcription from the interview with the DET school health nurse. Given this study focused on the intimate experiences of young people, I elected not to analyse or discuss data obtained from the DET school nurse. I intend to use this data in future publications exploring the important and under recognised role of the school health nurse in sexuality and relationship education. In Table 1 and throughout the remainder of this thesis, I refer to data generated by participants using pseudonyms allocated after data were collected.

4.7.1 Diffraction analysis. Initially, I experimented with a diffractive analysis process before I turned to a thematic analysis. Although I chose to re-analyse data from the 13 short films

using a thematic analysis method, the ideas generated during the initial diffractive process have influenced my interpretation and discussion of data. For this reason, I begin the discussion of the analysis process with an explanation of the diffractive process I undertook.

A diffractive analysis process seeks to work with data rather than on data (Barad, 2007). A diffractive way of working with data recognises that the subject or object in any situation is not determined before the process of intra-action begins (Barad, 2007). Barad's (2007) interpretation of diffraction highlighted that the concept of intra-action is different from that of interaction. It differs most significantly because subject and object engage equally in the process rather than one engaging with the other from a prior position (Barad, 2007). When working diffractively, minute details emerge through the process of intra-action, and these details become the focus of the analysis process. In line with a short-term ethnographic approach (Pink & Morgan, 2013), an intense focus on the detail continued to be of importance as I engaged in the speculative work of diffractive analysis (Barad, 2014). Focusing on the details of data, I undertook a diffractive analysis that had two distinct steps. The first step related to the management of data and the second step involved a process of writing diffractively with data.

In the first step, I engaged in several processes where I related to data through actions designed to manage and process all four data sets. This involved processes related to the physical management of data grounded in qualitative research methods (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2014). One of these processes involved transcribing all data by hand. During the period of transcribing data from observational notes, self-generated short films, video elicitation interviews and the one on one interview, I developed an intimate relationship with data. Through this intimacy, I became familiar with, attracted to and engaged by certain data moments (MacLure, 2013b). Jackson and Mazzei (2012) describe the power of data as an experience in which they are "drawn to that data which seemed to be about difference rather than sameness" (p. 4). Similarly, I was attracted to specific data moments in the creative short films that moved me in an embodied

way. For this reason, I elected to work in more detail with data contained in the 13 self-generated short films.

The second part of the diffractive analysis emerged as an experimental writing process. This process evolved from thinking with ideas offered by scholars such as Lanas et al. (2017), Davies (2014), and Taguchi and Palmer (2013) who experimented with different ways of doing diffractive analysis. The diffractive writing process emerged during a PhD writing retreat held mid-way through my third year of study. At this retreat, I was one of 25 PhD candidates who went to the seaside for three intense days of writing and discussion. The structure of the retreat centred around a series of silent 45 minute writing sessions loosely inspired by the Pomodoro writing process (Cirillo, 2018). The diffractive writing process that emerged during this retreat, involved writing with data through intra-action, entanglement and agential cuts that generated phenomena (Barad, 2007).

New ideas are phenomena within a diffractive analysis process, because they evolve with and through the process of relational intra-action (Barad, 2007). The phenomena of connection and disconnection, confusion and clarity, communication and miscommunication and intimacy evolving through processes of engagement emerged during the diffractive process (see Table 2, Section 4.7.2). These evolving phenomena offered insights into the 10 young people's intimate lives that challenged the common discourse of innocence and framed young people's experiences through the lens of risk or harm (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015).

Diffractive analysis is a method of analysis that results in working with data as a generative process rather than a hierarchical process driven by representationalism (Barad, 2007). Working diffractively is closely associated with post qualitative methods of data exploration and presentation rather than more traditional qualitative analysis approaches. As St.Pierre (2017) explained in her discussion about ontological shifts and the compromises associated with creative and speculative approaches, it is often difficult to convey post qualitative findings within the

structure of a research project that started from a qualitative approach and a reporting system that demands representation. This was certainly my experience and I acknowledge that within the structure of a conventional humanist methodology, a diffractive analysis was almost impossible to document in the manner required for completion of a traditional PhD thesis. Like St.Pierre (2017), I eventually had to put my new diffractive thinking “aside and continue” (p. 687) to analyse the data through a humanist and representative analysis process. After spending a great deal of time engaging with data through the generative and exciting diffractive analysis process, I stopped working diffractively in order to specifically and purposefully engage with theory and literature. At this point, I decided to undertake a second analysis using a traditional thematic approach (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Employing a thematic approach enabled me to address the research questions directly and explain the complexities of the intimate experiences discussed by the participants in relation to the current literature.

4.7.2 Thematic analysis. I undertook an analysis process for a second time using an inductive thematic analysis. The thematic analysis was informed by the work of Braun and Clarke (2006) and Creswell (2014). Both scholars recommend six steps or six phases during the process. Interestingly, Braun and Clarke (2006) acknowledge that many of the phases in thematic analysis are similar to other qualitative analysis processes. I have also identified that many of the steps in their interpretation of thematic analysis resonate with the early steps I undertook in the diffractive analysis. In Table 2, I visually represent the patterns and themes identified following the six phases of Braun and Clarke (2006) and the two steps I followed in the initial diffractive analysis. For clarity, I briefly outline the six phases of the thematic analysis and identify where I have noted similarities in the diffractive analysis I initially undertook (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

1. Phase 1 involved transcribing all data, reading all transcriptions and noting common words, ideas or data of interest. I conducted this step during the initial diffractive analysis and re-read the transcripts again when I undertook the thematic analysis.

2. Phase 2 involved identifying initial codes or labels for common or interesting ideas across all data sets. The blue lines in Table 2 illustrate multiple phenomena that emerged during step 1 of the initial diffractive analysis and then my focus on data from participant generated short film. Later during the thematic analysis, I generated multiple codes or labels with data obtained from participant generated short films.
3. Phase 3 necessitated a thorough examination of codes and labels to recognise common patterns and themes. In the initial diffractive analysis, four key phenomena were identified. By contrast, during the thematic analysis a larger number of themes were evident.
4. Phase 4 involved checking the themes against the coded transcripts and identifying data instances. This process involved re-reading transcripts, re watching films and checking consistency of themes against codes and identified data instances. In Table 2, the review of themes is coded green.
5. Phase 5 involved a process of refining, checking and naming major themes and sub themes to illustrate significant patterns in data. Through this phase of the thematic analysis, I identified the three major themes of locations of intimacy, behavioural practices of intimacy and emotions and intimacy. In Table 2, this phase is coded yellow.
6. In Phase 6, the major themes and sub themes were analysed and discussed in relation to the research questions, theory and literature. This final reporting phase is documented in Chapters 6, 7 and 8 of this thesis.

Table 2

Data Analysis Codes, Themes and Phenomena

3 Major themes identified from analysis processes (Research questions –Primary 1 and 2)		
Thematic analysis of short films – Phase 5 defining and naming themes		
Locations of intimacy	Behavioural practices of intimacy	Emotion and intimacy
Thematic analysis of short films – phase 3 and 4 reviewing themes		
Digital locations, Facebook, Kik	Connecting, Sharing, Disconnecting	Digital emotion, Confusion, Frustration, Upset, Disappointment, Anger, Hatred
Thematic analysis of short films –Phase 1, and 2 familiarising, generating codes and identifying themes		
Being intimate through/with messaging Social Media, telephone Facebook, Kik, Instagram, Face to Face in person Moving from digital to in person Spaces of trial/initiation/exploration Connecting to unknowns Forms of intimacy People, Animals	Intimate behaviours in digital location Beginnings-Connections, Introductions/meeting/starting/connecting Friendships Requests/accepting/process of Unknown contacts/Sharing/communicating/Texting as intimacy after breakup. Sharing fun times/Sharing problems vetting strangers, Behaviours of exploration/experimentation, Communicating/Talking a lot Questioning/Analysing, Social conventions - /liking friends of friends/liking accepting, Being best friends, Dating, Problems associated with behaviours – Arguments, receiving nudes, predatory behaviours, abusive/negative behaviours – name Bullying and name calling, Personal rules usual practices followed/not followed Dating and breaking up, Researching. How do you Trust/friends of friends/strangers online. Being trusted and trusting others. Thinking about behaviours – Reflection/analysis. Silences /Learning, Disconnection Saying no/non consent Can't say no/consenting under duress. Family as gate keepers. Making decisions – Decision making. Control/ disconnect	Feelings, Misunderstandings communication/intentions occur across digital – confusion Sharing feelings Frustration, Anger, Emotion on Facebook not in FTF Affect of impulsivity/not communicating consent/non consent. Affect of action/inaction. Negative or harmful feelings of affect. Negative feelings toward self. Feelings of care and concern, Intrigue, Awkwardness, Weirdness Confusion, Regret, Powerlessness, Emotional release, Helplessness/Hopelessness, Complicated, Regret

Diffractive analysis step 2 –key phenomena emerging from diffractive writing from 13 self-generated short films. (Thematic analysis – Phase 3 and 4 Searching and checking themes against data)				
Process – Intimacy and learning occurs through process with material and more than human within the process		Connections and Disconnections	Confusion and Clarity	Communication and Miscommunication
Diffractive analysis step 1 – multiple phenomena emerging from familiarisation of all data sets (Thematic analysis: Phase 1 and 2 familiarizing and generating codes)				
Engaging in intimate relationships Creativity – Freedom/Autonomy/self-expression Learning through examining lived experiences Process has Intangible outcomes Process has tangible outcomes Movement through/Engagement with range of processes Researcher in the process	Conceptual framing of young people as agentic sexual subjects Time and Space – Freedom/Autonomy Digital devices Nature physical space Movement during process	Intimacy with material and more than human process of reflecting upon intimate relationship intimate others intimate self concepts of relationships desire to be in/capacity to change what is occurring in intimate relationships	Trust Confusion Frustration Anger	Confusion/Questioning Clarity/Asking for help Decision making Resolutions Skills development and developing

Examples of thematic analysis and codes are in Appendix G and H. As indicated in Table 2, I identified three major themes through the thematic analysis. As I worked through the “defining and naming themes” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92), phase, I identified sub-themes within each major theme. Labels given to major and sub themes represent the “essence” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 92) of a range of practices associated with exploring and experiencing intimacy. It is important to note that participants did not necessarily mention the locations, behaviours or emotions associated with intimacy in any linear or systematic way. Rather, data relating to the three major themes were discussed throughout their self-generated short films.

The first of the major themes identified the significance of the locations that shaped and formed intimacy. The discussion of locations of intimacy builds a base from which to understand how young people aged 11-14 experienced intimacy in digital environments. The second theme relates to the behavioural practices that framed participants’ experiences of intimacy. This discussion identified three key behaviours that the participants commonly undertook to explore intimacy. Finally, the third major theme identified data relating to the forms of intimacy and emotional affect experienced by three participants. Data from three participants, who discussed their feelings and emotions at length, offered detailed and complex narratives exploring emotion, intimacy and affect. An intentional focus on the details of only three participants, queers the usual process of exploring themes emerging from the experiences of all participants.

As I explore data through these three themes, I refer to data extracts as data instances in line with Denzin’s (2017) argument that a data moment represents a “given cultural practice that happened at a particular time and place” (p. 83). Through this framing data are understood as individual moments that cannot be replicated, framed as normal or generalised to others because each and “every instance is unique and has its own logic” (Denzin, 2017, p. 83). Next, I discuss a number of methodological limitations experienced during this study.

4.8 Limitations

The most significant Methodological limitation related to working diffractively with data (Davies, 2014; Taguchi & Palmer, 2013). As discussed in Section 4.7.1, diffraction is a concept utilised to discuss movement and the way patterns of difference generate new ideas, patterns and phenomenon (Barad, 2007; Taguchi & Palmer, 2013). For this reason it is very difficult to follow a diffractive method of data analysis in a similar manner to analysis methods that are described in qualitative research guides such as those outlined by Creswell (2014) or Braun and Clarke (2006). Therefore, the method of diffractive analysis I initially employed emerged through the process of working with theory, methodological ideas, the related literature and data itself. This emerging and speculative process was time consuming, anxiety producing and difficult to describe because it required a great deal of trial and error. Although I spent countless months working diffractively with data and writing thousands of words describing the interesting and insightful phenomena that emerged, I was ultimately unable to translate these ideas into a discussion appropriate for a PhD. For this reason, I elected to re-analyse data from the short films using thematic analysis.

On a more practical note, I encountered a limitation relating to the use of digital devices as a visual data generation tool. In the original design of the study, I assumed that each class would have a set of digital devices. Unfortunately, the research site had only one class set of digital tablets. Given the limited number of devices at the school, it was impossible to use the one class set each week. In order to manage this constraint, I purchased three mini tablets using my own money. Although the university reimbursed a portion of this money, the initial outlay could have been a serious constraint for many students.

A final limitation was the small number of participants (10) and the number of films (13) produced as data by young people who self-selected to participate in the research, and returned consent and assent forms. Across the research process, approximately 25 students from each class

engaged in both phases of the creative filmmaking process but only 10 could share their self-generated short films as research data after returning the necessary forms. From this small number of participants, no generalisations about the intimate and digital lives of young people aged 11-14 is possible. However, insights gained from an examination of the data from all 10 participants, offer transferable ideas about the intimate lives of young people that could be explored in future research.

4.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I documented the methodology and four data generation methods that produced data offering insights into the rarely discussed intimate and networked lives of young people aged 11-14. By describing the creative filmmaking method in detail, I contribute to creative research methods and the application of a subjunctive methodology within education research. This contribution builds on the work of sexuality and identity scholars exploring the intimate and sexual lives of young people using creative and participant led research methods. The next chapter introduces biographical and contextual information about the participants before a more detailed discussion of their intimate experiences is presented in Chapters, 6, 7 and 8.

Chapter 5: Contextual Profiles of Participating Young People

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I offer a contextual profile of each participant constructed after analysing all data sets outline in Chapter 4. The intention of this chapter is to present and acknowledge the unique and individual nature of each participant. These profiles demonstrate my commitment to respecting each of these young people as individuals and my intention to acknowledge each participant in context before analysing the details of their intimate lives across Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Young people's intimate digital practices are subjective, individual and special. Lucinda Pangrazio (2017) remarked in her thesis, *Becoming Digital: An Exploration of Digital Media in Young People's Lives*, that the digital practices of young people are unique and diverse. Importantly, Pangrazio (2017) noted that experiences of digital engagement were influenced by socialisation practices, participants' access to and history of engaging in digital environments, and cultural factors that often determined the scope and context of their digital explorations. Pangrazio (2017) recognised the importance of contextualising these influencing factors before analysing and discussing data produced by young people.

Like digital engagement, the diversity of young people's experiences of intimacy are unique and individual. In recognition of this diversity and following Pangrazio's (2017, 2019) process of contextualising each participant's contribution to the research, I present a profile of each of the 10 participants and include a still image taken from their films. The images, taken from screen shots of their films are represented in Figures 4-13. These images demonstrate each participant's desire to be identified in their narratives about intimacy. They also offer momentary insights into the rich and often complex understandings about intimacy that, when viewed in

motion, emerge anew with each screening. These images are offered in an attempt to combat the impossibility of conveying the richness of the content of these films in a static PhD thesis. The profiles in this chapter offer an insight into each participant, outline the intimate experiences they discussed, and document participants' thoughts about the many ways that engagement in the filmmaking process affected their understanding of intimacy. In these contextual profiles, I distinguish between the young people in Year 8 and Year 7 because participants from these two separate year levels and two separate classes, represent two of the three participant groups who generated data during the research process.

5.2 Year 8 Participants

As discussed in Chapter 4, four young people in Year 8 created four short films about their experiences of intimacy. All students across both classes were invited to participate in the research process. However, only those profiled in this chapter completed all necessary consent forms after self-selecting to be involved in the research process. Only one young woman from Year 8 participated in the study while three young men engaged in the creative filmmaking method. All four of the young people from Year 8 were aged between 12-14 years at the time of the study. In the next sections, I provide a contextual profile of each participant accompanied by an image taken directly from the short film they produced.

5.2.1 Sophia. Sophia was dealing with many issues in her life during the research. Throughout her narrative on film, Sophia mentioned that she had “stuff going on at home” and that her responses to the issues in her life made her “pretty scary because of how I react to stuff and how I handle stuff, not that great” (Sophia SF, 2016). In response to a question I asked in the video elicitation interview, Sophia revealed that she has no one to talk to about her problems and she commented, “like the stuff I talked about I don’t really talk about it, about it to anyone” (Sophia VEI, 2016). She explained that she usually held onto everything until “I explode [...] just taking my anger out on people” (Sophia VEI, 2016). Throughout her 22.37 minute film, Sophia

described experiences of intimacy with three different young men during a long monologue to camera that revealed the fragile nature of her complicated intimate life.

Sophia made numerous films with several of her friends during the creative filmmaking method. However, in the film she offered as data, Sophia worked alone. In a film that feels like a private confession to camera, Sophia framed herself in a medium close-up that created a sense of intimacy between herself, the camera and any potential viewer. Sophia spoke slowly and paused regularly throughout her film. My transcription notes indicate that she was nervous and “she looked around to check she was alone and could not be heard by others” (Transcription notes Sophia SF, 2016). These notes highlight the intimacy she developed with the digital device and recorded the way “she leans into the camera and puts her clenched fists under her chin” (Transcription notes Sophia SF, 2016). In both her self-generated short film and across the 11.19 minutes of her video elicitation interview, Sophia described herself as an angry or scary person.

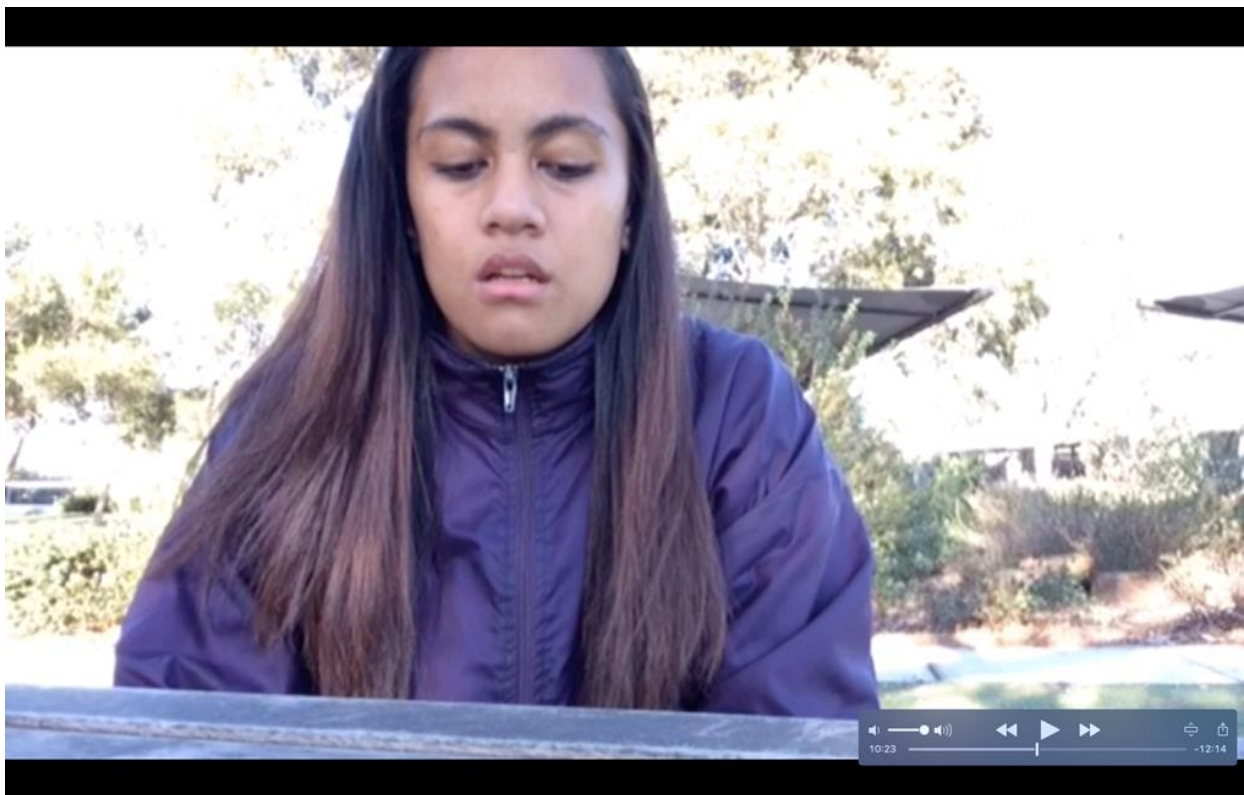


Figure 4. Sophia

However, in her film, and in the image illustrated in Figure 4, Sophia appeared calm, considered and rather melancholy. Throughout the film, she seemed to be thinking deeply about her experiences and clarifying some unresolved issues as she recalled and described them to the invisible “other” in the camera. Over the course of talking about her issues on film and in the final video elicitation interview, Sophia identified a number of new understandings that emerged for her during the process of discussing her intimate experiences on film.

All of Sophia’s narratives described processes of connecting, sharing and disconnecting from intimate relationships with three young men who went to her school but whom she initially met on Facebook. Sophia described engagement in forms of digital intimacy that were intense, satisfying, confusing and disappointing for her. However, the intimacy she experienced on Facebook did not translate into intimate FTF experiences with any of the three boys. Sophia’s comments suggest she is a young woman experiencing confusion, sadness and loneliness. Her comments also indicated that she had no one to help her understand or work through her family issues, problems with anger or her experiences of exploring intimacy with young men. However, one of Sophia’s final statements in her video elicitation interview suggests she arrived at some new decisions about intimacy through the creative filmmaking process. In answer to a question about what she might say to young people about intimacy after her experience of making a short film, Sophia stated she thought that young people should “stand up for yourself. Like in relationships, stand up for yourself I guess. Have a voice. Like talk instead of backing off a bit like what I did in my relationships” (Sophia VEI, 2016).

5.2.2 Jackson. Jackson appeared to be a very confident young man on film but the details of his experiences of intimacy revealed that he had issues trusting people online. On a number of occasions in both his self-directed short films and in the 11.51 minute video elicitation interview, Jackson talked about issues of trust. On one occasion in the 5.04 minute film he made with Aiden, Jackson discussed his lack of trust describing the difficulty of engaging in a group

chat on Kik. Later he extended his commentary on trust from not trusting friends of friends to not trusting at all. His issues with trust became clear when he stated, “don’t trust. It is bad!” It appears that the social conventions of liking and or accepting friend requests from a friend of friends exacerbated Jackson’s issues around trust and caused him to experience confusion and unease as he explored intimacy online. Through the process of sharing his experiences, Jackson explored his own issues of trust, learned about different types of intimacy, and as he reported in his video elicitation interview, learned a lot about intimacy and relationships from discussing intimacy while making films with his peers. This is evident when he said, “well it was fun. I did learn a thing or two [...] it was fun to do it with friends. Yeah to sort of learn off each other about what they know about it as well as what I know about it” (Jackson VEI, 2016). Jackson’s comments suggest that working with peers to explore, discuss and analyse experiences of intimacy helped him to understand his issues of trust and his concerns about exploring intimacy online.



Figure 5. Jackson

Jackson enjoyed making films outside the classroom with the two other male participants from Year 8. In addition to speaking directly to camera, Jackson used graphic images to enhance the story in the form of hand drawn pictures, applying colour filters and incorporating other moving images into his film. In both films, Jackson and his partners employed a question and answer format before reverting to an individual monologue to camera. Throughout these monologues, Jackson held the camera very close to his face. Using close ups and extreme close ups as framing techniques, Jackson constructed a sense of intimacy with himself, the camera, his story and the eventual viewer. As illustrated in Figure 5, Jackson's relationship with the digital device was very physical as he interacted with it and touched the screen many times while narrating his story. In my transcription notes from his films, I recorded this intimacy in the following way.

He looks at himself in the mirror of the screen. He looks directly at the camera, at his fingers as he points to the camera and wonders aloud about their size. He whispers to it [the camera in the device] and moves toward it (Transcription notes Jackson and Aiden SF, 2016).

While viewing the film Jackson's physical gestures, such as hand movements, close placement of his head and fingers to the camera, created a sense that he was confessing details of his intimate experiences to a trusted confidant or friend. As he was narrating these experiences his constant pausing, sighing, placement of his head in his hands and use of the phrase "Oh God" (Jackson and Aiden SF, 2016) gave an impression that the experiences he was revealing to the camera had not been shared before.

5.2.3 Aiden. Like Jackson, Aiden was an enthusiastic research participant who enjoyed the process of making a film away from the classroom environment. The contextual information Aiden provided in both the short film he made with Jackson and then later in his 11.51-minute video elicitation interview, indicated that he had a clear understanding of the personal rules that

determined his engagement in digital intimate connections. During his monologue to camera, Aiden articulated his thoughts about the inappropriateness of sending sexualised messages. Interestingly, these views demonstrated a sound knowledge of the legal implications associated with young people sharing nude images.

During his narrative, Aiden sat on a wooden bench at a distance from the camera held by Jackson. As illustrated in Figure 6, this positioning framed Aiden in a medium shot with his body, legs and the garden captured in the frame. In the opening dialogue of the film, Aiden revealed that he had explored intimacy across a range of digital locations. However, he later

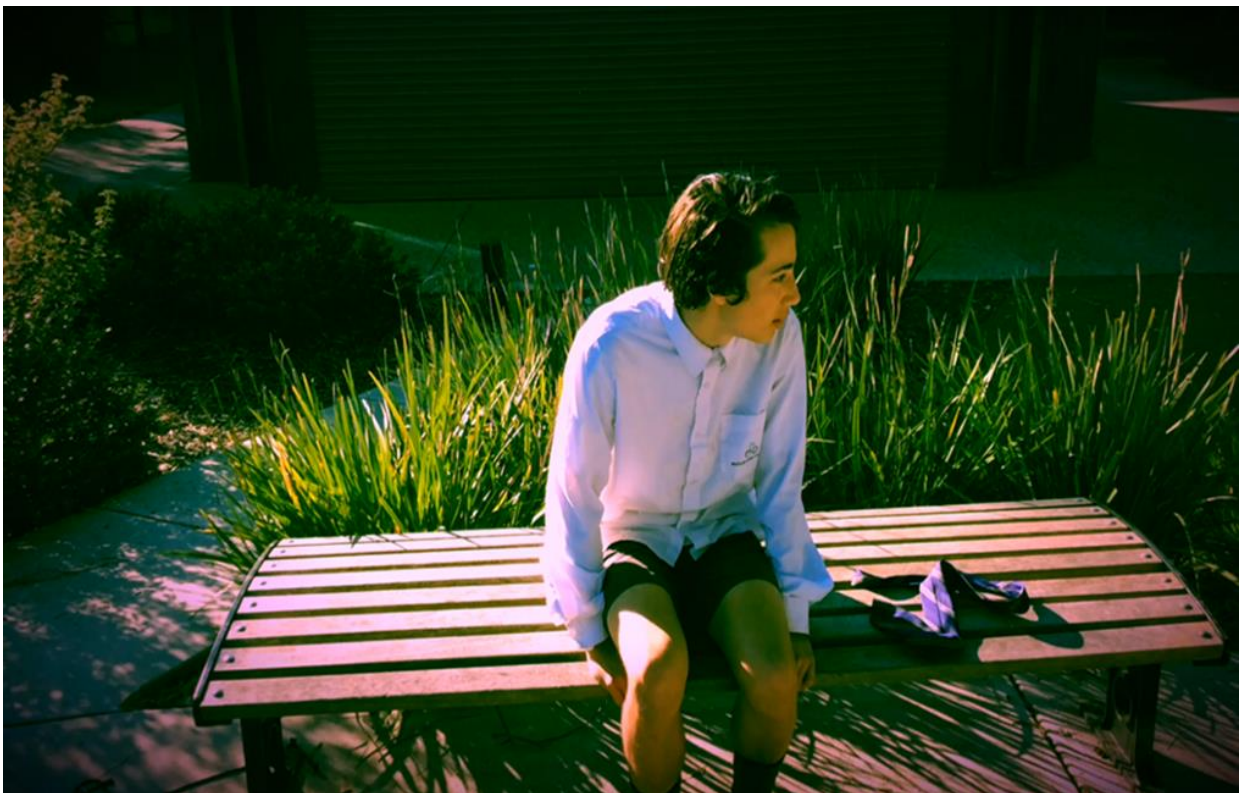


Figure 6. Aiden

discussed an experience that he described as a “sexual relationship” in more detail. His narrative about a sexual relationship that developed when a girl sent him a nude, and then asked for one in return, helps to contextualise his cautious and resistant stance to the practice of sending sexualised messages. Although his narrative suggested a clear understanding of his behavioural

practices and thoughts about sending nude images, Aiden's agitated movements and the body language observed on film indicated that he was anxious and uncomfortable as he recalled his experiences of receiving a nude image from a young woman with whom he was exploring digital intimacy.

My transcription notes of his film indicated, that as he spoke "Aiden begins fidgeting, moving his hand and holding his school tie. He is placing them [his hands and the tie] under his knees passing the tie from one knee to the other like a ball" (Transcription notes Jackson and Aiden SF, 2016). These notes and his image in Figure 6, reveal that Aiden experienced some discomfort recalling the story of receiving the nude image from the girl. However, in the video elicitation interview Aiden revealed that he really enjoyed the process of making films and indicated that he developed clarity and a level of certainty about his intimate experiences that had not existed before he made his film. Aiden's response points to a number of ways that the process of making a film helped him to explore and explain aspects of intimacy that were previously unclear to him. He said,

I thought intimate relationships meant like sex stuff like that, like hand jobs and stuff like that but it's much different towards online spaces. Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat like cause an intimate relationship, you can have with like a family member for example, or a brother or sister or a close friend even a girlfriend. So, like, my understanding was like, better when I knew, did all this, and I thought an intimate relationship, now its clarified in my head a bit so like, I know what it is (Aiden VEI, 2016).

Aiden's comments highlight that many issues became clear for him during the process of discussing his intimate experiences on film. His comments during the 11.51 minutes of the final interview, offer a picture of the learning process that happened for Aiden as he reflected, discussed and analysed his experiences of intimacy with his peers during the creative filmmaking method.

5.2.4 Lucas. Initially, Lucas did not want to contribute a film for the research. For a number of weeks, he was happy to make films with his friends who were not participating in the study, and he had specifically stated that he did not want to be included in the research. However, toward the end of the research and the creative filmmaking method he changed his mind and asked to join the formal research process by providing me with a film as data. After he and his parents signed consent forms, Lucas produced two films for this study. In one film he worked with Jackson and in the other, Lucas worked alone. Although all the other participants in Year 8 made films outside in the open air, Lucas worked on his solo film inside the school building. The storeroom space he chose to reveal his story was dark and confining because of its small space. The confines of the physical space added an aesthetic and intensity to the words that he spoke as he described an undesired experience of intimacy.

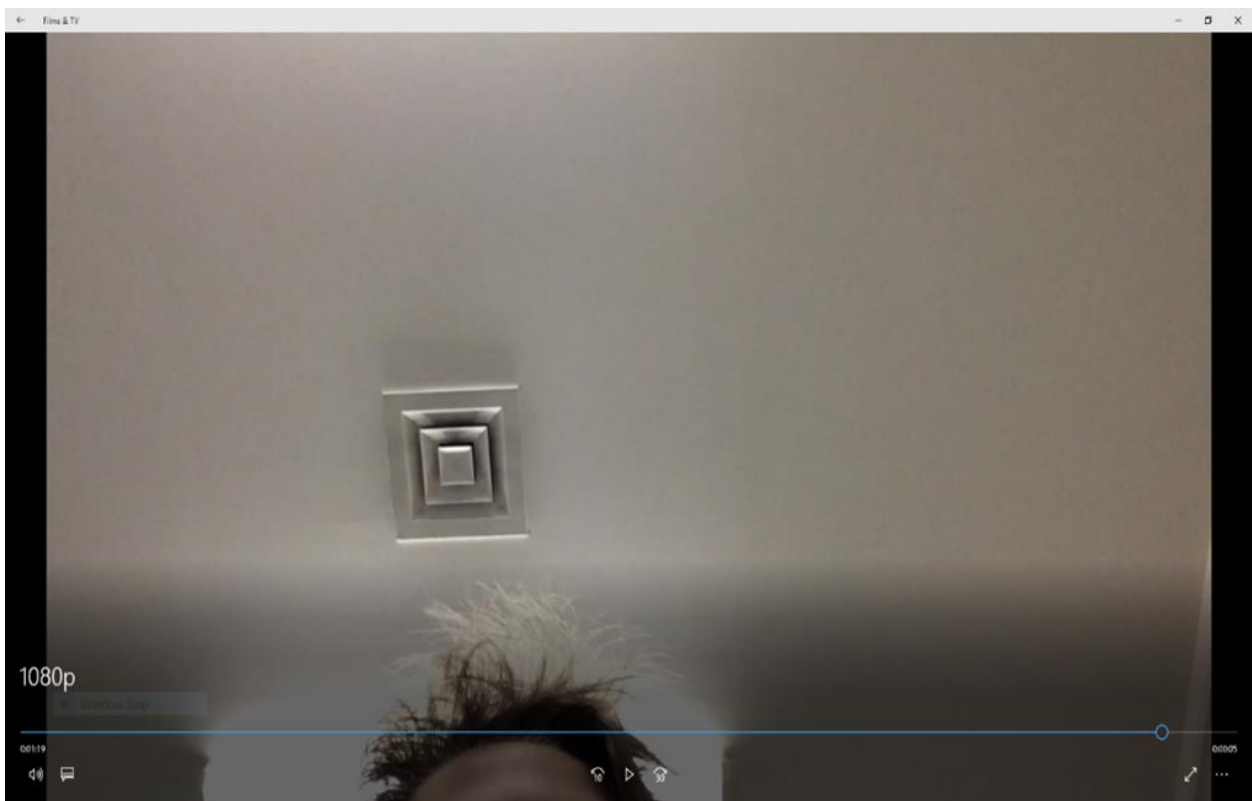


Figure 7. Lucas

Throughout his film, Lucas was close to the camera but rarely showed his face. Figure 7 illustrates this framing. However, even without displaying meaning through the visual imagery of

his face, Lucas succeeded in conveying a level of frustration and anger as he annotated his narrative with harsh banging on the table where he had placed the camera. Consequently, as he spoke and banged the table, the camera jumped throughout the 1.24 minutes of the film. Lucas' story of miscommunication, frustration and undesired intimacy with a young woman who went to his school, illustrates that he was engaged in a complex and challenging form of intimacy that he did not understand and felt unable to control.

Lucas sounded frustrated and angry as he narrated a story about his inability to manage his intimate experiences. His words, his actions and the continuous banging sound that he made to emphasise the end of each sentence, conveyed a disturbing level of negative energy and a feeling of helplessness that permeated the film in a way that was both moving and confronting for the viewer. This confronting aspect of his film created data that appeared to “glow” (MacLure, 2013a, p. 661) or even shout out at me each time I watched the film or read the transcript. His film urged me to pay attention, to listen well, to focus on the details of what he said, how he said what he said, and how I felt about what he said. Interestingly, when I asked Lucas to tell me about his favourite part of the film during the video elicitation interview, he answered, “when I was hitting the table” (he hit the table to illustrate) (Lucas VEI, 2016). After asking why he liked this aspect of his film, Lucas explained, “cause I was nervous and it [hitting the table] helped me get over my nerves” (Lucas VEI, 2016). His comment suggests that his practice of hitting the table was a performance to mask his anxiety and to calm his nerves not the behaviour of an angry or negative young man as I had first thought. Throughout the analysis, data from Lucas' film affected me in ways that was different from the other 12 films. For this reason, I analysed Lucas' comments and instances from his data in a number of different ways across all three data analysis chapters.

Through his short but powerful film, a portrait of a confused, frustrated and at times helpless young man emerged. Lucas' film illustrated what happened to one young man who did

not appear to have the skills or capacity to make decisions to remove himself from the intimate relationship that he did not want. Like Sophia, Lucas appeared to be struggling with his feelings of frustration and anger. Unlike Jackson and Aiden, Lucas did not appear to discuss his experiences with his peers but instead, chose to use the camera as a confessional companion.

5.3 Year 7 Participants

The six young women profiled in this section made nine of the 13 films produced as data. These participants, who all self-identified as young women, were aged 11-13 at the time of the research and were members of one Year 7 class. Table 1 in the previous chapter (Section 4.7), documents the details of these nine films and any additional data produced by and collected from these six participants. In the following sections, a contextual profile of each participant provides a brief snapshot of their rich and varied intimate lives.

5.3.1 Riley. During the creative filmmaking method, Riley made several films with a larger group of Year 7 girls but like Lucas in Year 8, she worked alone on the one film discussed in this thesis. Riley presented as a confident young woman who navigated a challenging intimate experience that was complicated by the involvement of her brother. In a similar manner to the Year 8 participant Aiden, Riley had clear personal rules that determined how she responded to a situation that arose when her intimate connection moved from Facebook to a FTF meeting in her home. The complexity of her intimate relationship with the young man and her brother is evident when she explained, “my brother tried to do something really bad, he tried to make us stay and I said no” (Riley SF, 2016). Riley’s comment highlights that she had an ability to articulate her intention not to participate in an unwanted intimate action, and demonstrates that she had a sense of her own rules around intimacy that she could convey successfully in an “awkward” (Riley SF, 2016) situation. Her ability to articulate herself with confidence and capacity suggests that in Year 7, she had developed communication and reasoning skills that helped her manage intimate

connections without feeling coerced or pressured to behave in a way that was not appropriate for her.

The film Riley made was very short with a running time of only .59 seconds. Riley created a sense of intimacy in her film by working alone and engaging closely with the camera. Figure 8 illustrates how she also created interest and variation through her sophisticated application of graphics, still images and facial expressions common across selfie culture. Riley's narrative highlighted her ability to articulate consent and non-consent in a range of situations. Her capacity to say "no" and be happy with the result of her decision offered an interesting contrast to Lucas' story as his inability to say "no" resulted in a frustrating intimate experience that left him feeling helpless and confused.

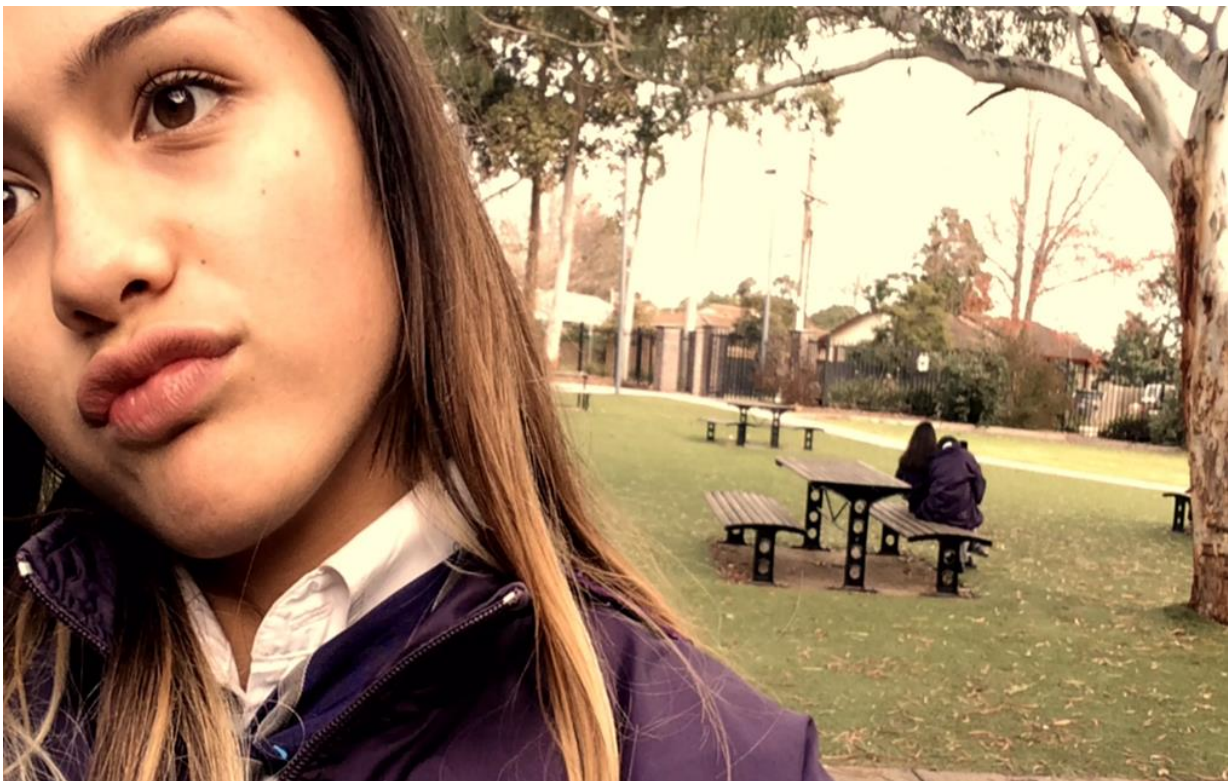


Figure 8. Riley

Riley indicated in her 7.22 minute video elicitation interview, that she really enjoyed the technical aspects of the creative filmmaking method. In particular, she reported that she enjoyed the filmmaking process because she learned how to edit footage, use music and apply graphics to

create a film. Other comments indicated that during the creative filmmaking method she learned that “there are heaps of different relationships and not just like relationships that we all thought was just there like boyfriend and girlfriend” (Riley VEI, 2016). Through her final interview, a picture of a young woman developing awareness and understanding of her own expression of intimacy emerged.

5.3.2 Isabella. Isabella made two films with her friends during the creative filmmaking method. However, like many other participants, she also made a short film on her own where she discussed an intimate experience that was still troubling her. During a conversation in a short film she made with a group of young women from Year 7, Isabella was asked, “What do you think about intimate relationships?” Her response of “it’s a loving thing to be with your family and um friends” (Isabella et al. SF, 2016), suggests that she has a loving family and many friends with whom she experienced intimacy. This response contrasts with the story of intimacy she told in private when she made her 1.52 minute short film. The story she chose to tell when she made a film on her own indicates that Isabella experienced intimacy outside her family and friends that was both engaging and abusive.

In a similar manner to Lucas in Year 8, Isabella placed herself in a quiet corner of a classroom to make a short film on her own. Throughout a film where she recounted a story of intimacy with two young men, Isabella crouched over the camera, holding the cord of the earplugs in her hand and guiding it so that at times the closeness of her mouth muffled the words she narrated. Figure 9 shows how she hunched her body over the digital device, as she whispered her story of connecting to a boy who “added” her on Facebook. Isabella created intimacy with the camera through the proximity of her body and her whispering voice. This intimacy created a sense that the story she was telling was secret or shameful. Like several other participants, the process of telling her story to camera appeared confessional in nature. Through this close

confessional process, Isabella appears to have used the digital device to capture and witness her experience of an abusive intimate experience that she may not have wanted to share with her friends.

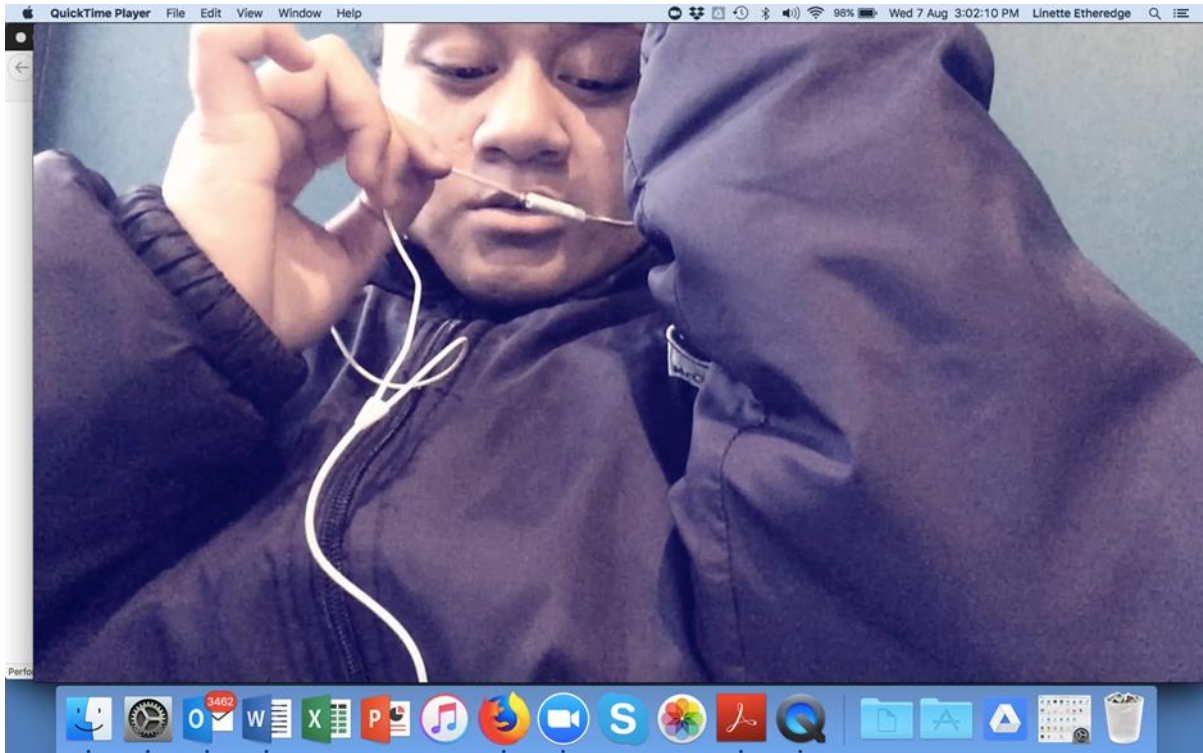


Figure 9. Isabella

Isabella's story conveys intimacy of communication and abuse. In these first of two stories of intimacy she narrated in her short film, Isabella explained that she was the target of name-calling. Her narrative reported that she "said no to him" before she once again connected with the same "guy" and "things happened between me and him" (Isabella SF, 2016). Although she articulated a clear sense of personal boundaries, Isabella's story of intimacy illustrated, that even after an abusive incident she continued her engagement with the young man. In her second story of her intimate experiences, she explained that she talked and talked with another boy who asked her out even though she said no to him. During this narrative, Isabella made a statement that suggested she knew how things worked in her social world. When she said, "it's kind of easy

for a girl to say no”, Isabella offered an insight into her right as a girl to refuse the advances of young men who were interested in her, but whom she did not like or want to know.

5.3.3 Ava. Ava was a happy and willing participant in the research process. She was always smiling and laughing with her friends both in the classroom and outside while she was making films. In the two films she made during the research, Ava spoke briefly about herself and her experiences of intimacy. During these films, she did not reveal many details about her personal life or her personal circumstances, indicating only that she had intimate relationships with both female best friends and male boyfriends.

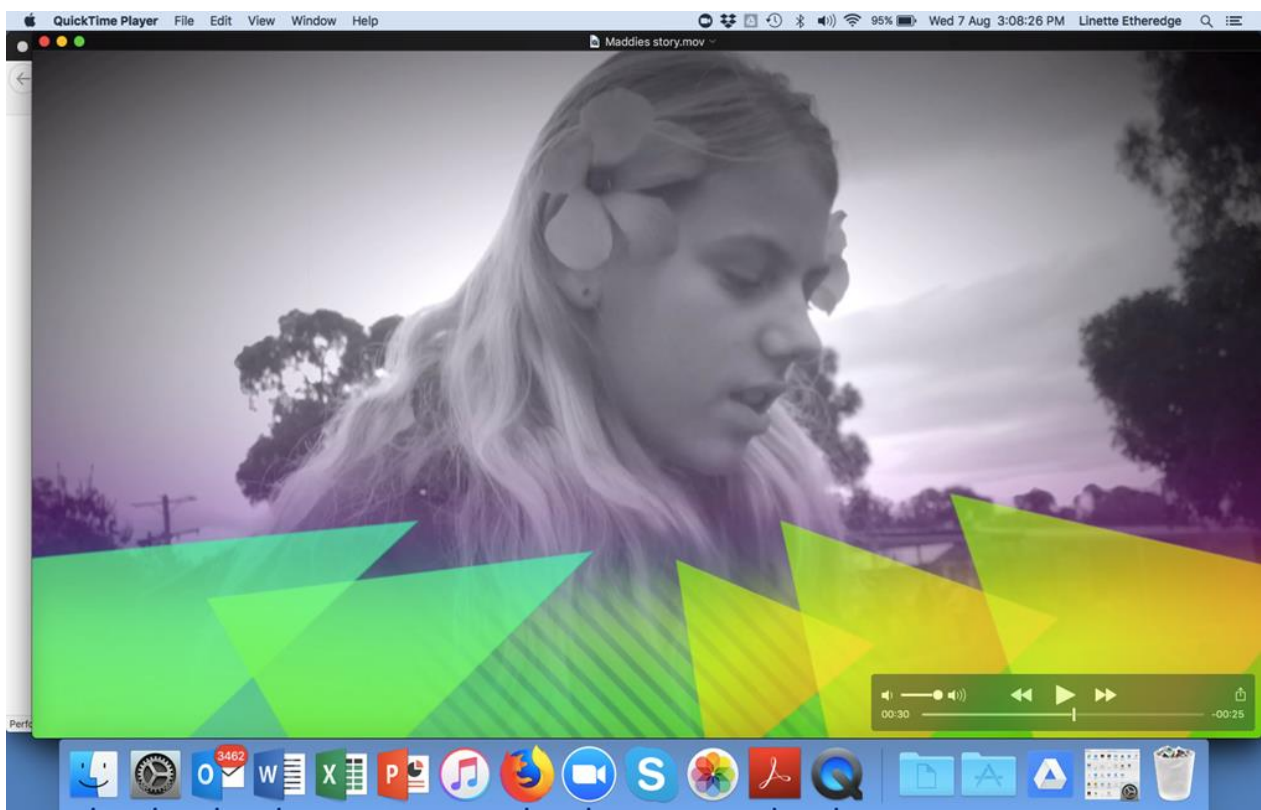


Figure 10. Ava

The opening of Ava’s short film shows a full face, close up still shot of Ava smiling. Under the image of her face, she added colourful graphics and emoji kissing faces. Ava constructed herself as a colourful and playful persona placing large flowers in her long blonde hair and positioning herself sitting to the side of the camera framed in a close up. When I asked

Ava what she liked most about her film during the 6.28 minutes of her video elicitation interview, she identified that “the way I put the flowers in my hair” (Ava SF, 2016) was her favourite part of the film. Figure 10 illustrates this important and performative component of her film. Although Ava took time to construct a persona for the camera, she did not make eye contact with the camera once throughout the .55 seconds of her film.

The detailed construction of her short film indicates that she was interested in the aesthetics of the film, and she was particular about her presentation. However, she did not engage at all with the camera, and therefore, no intimacy was generated even though she identified that the experience of making the film was important to her. When I asked her if the filmmaking method was worthwhile during the video elicitation interview she explained, that “[be] coming friends” with her peers was the most important thing she got out of the creative filmmaking process.

When I asked her to explain what she meant by the comment she said, “um we just started talking, an then we talked even more and then became more friends, cause normally, we don’t really talk to each other and then we [be] came more friends” (Ava VEI, 2016). Ava’s statement suggests that although she did not appear to become intimate with the camera during the filmmaking process, she experienced a new and deeper level of intimacy with her peers while engaging in the creative filmmaking method.

From brief narratives offered across the short film Ava made on her own, and the one she made with a group of her friends, an impression emerged of a young woman exploring a broad continuum of intimate experiences. When her friends asked for details about her favourite intimate relationship and suggested some possible options such as “friend, BF (boyfriend), GF (girlfriend), Family, Pets” as options, Ava responded that her favourite intimate relationship was “my BFF” (Best Friend Forever) (Isabella et al. SF, 2016) who she indicated was Emma. An analysis of data from her individual short film indicates that her experiences of intimacy with

young men were more challenging than the intimate experiences she cherished with her BFF. Her experiences of intimacy involved connections and disconnections with two different young men she initially met on Facebook.

5.3.4 Olivia. Olivia made three short films during the research process. Two of the films she made alone while the third film was with Isabella, Mia and others (Isabella et al. SF, 2016). In the group film, Mia asked Olivia to define intimate relationships. Olivia's response offers an insight into her thoughts about intimacy as well as some personal details about her life. When asked the question "just wondering what you think about them" Olivia said, "I think intimate relationships mean kind, hope and communication and love, and I think there is all sorts of kinds of relationships" (Isabella et al. SF, 2016). As the exchange of questions and answers continued, Olivia discussed her connection to family, friends and her twin brother. This dialogue with Mia suggested that Olivia had strong connections to family, friends and perhaps a special form of intimacy with her twin brother. From this discussion, an impression of a confident and self-assured young woman emerged. An understanding of Olivia's confident personality was further enhanced in two additional films she made by herself exploring her experience of intimacy with a young man on Instagram. Her detailed account of the analysis process she went through to check a potential intimate connection indicated that Olivia had strong personal rules that governed her behavioural practices associated with exploring intimacy online.

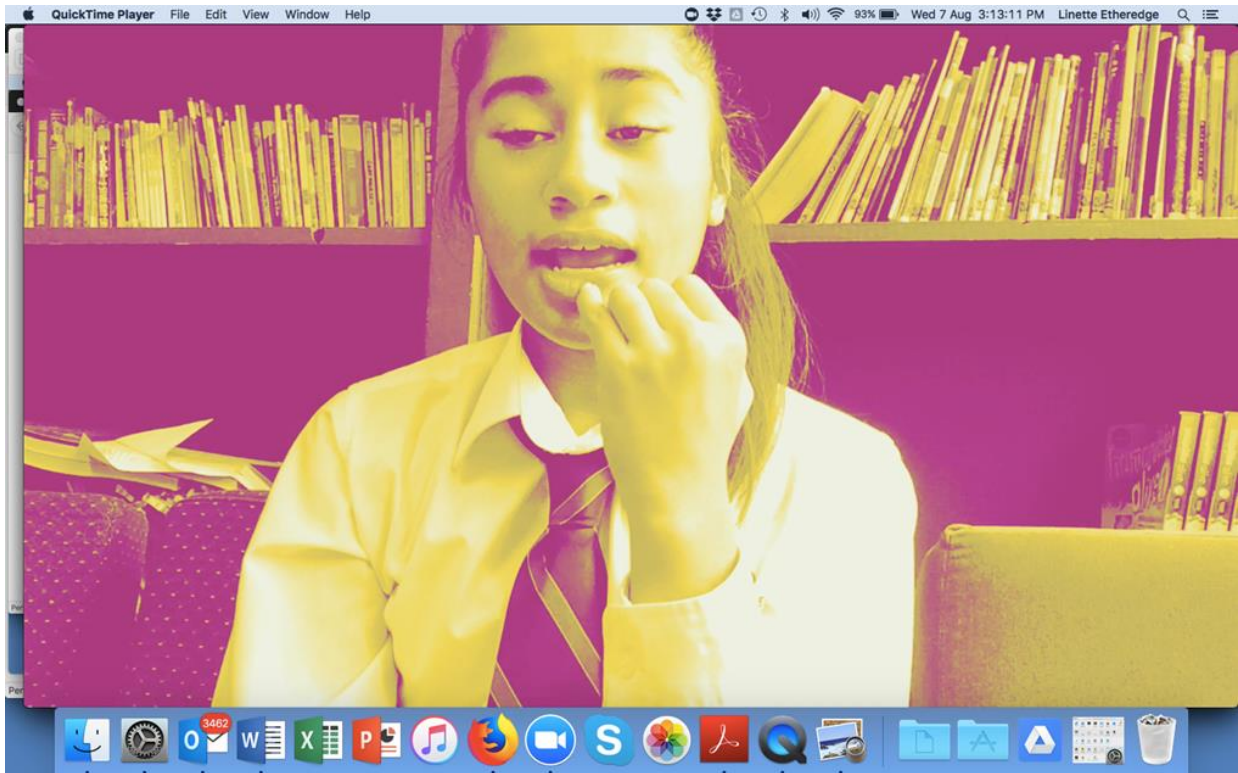


Figure 11. Olivia

The two films that Olivia made on her own were almost identical in content and construction. In contrast to the film she made with friends, Olivia chose to film her narrative inside the school building in a small area lined with books as evident in Figure 11. In her individual films, Olivia placed herself directly in the centre of the camera in a close up framing. The first film runs for 2.39 minutes, and throughout Olivia spoke quietly and directly to the camera as if she was talking to a friend. By contrast, in the second film that runs for 1.42 minutes, Olivia was more animated and she used graphics to write her name as a title page with two palm trees positioned at either end.

Olivia's intimate connection with the camera was evident throughout both of the films she made about her process of exploring intimacy with unknown young men on Instagram. What is fascinating to consider in relation to her films are the comments she made about the filmmaking process in the video elicitation interview. In an instance from this interview, Olivia offered an

important insight into why she made two films discussing the same experience of exploring intimacy in Instagram. Her comments came at the conclusion of the interview when I asked her,

LE: Would you recommend students making films to explore ideas?

Olivia: Yeah, ah, yeah, like if they don't have anyone to tell, yeah, they could just talk it through the camera. See what they've been saying 'n revise what they've said. See if it's worked or not worked. [..]

LE: So, did you like that process of being able to record, revise, check and then change it if you wanted?

Olivia: Yeah

LE: Why did you like that?

Olivia: Cause I didn't know the meaning. But I was confused at the start. But then, I recorded myself and I understand how it, like, what it meant (she nods)
(Olivia VEI, 2016).

Olivia's comments suggest that she used the process of creating two different but similar films to explore her ideas about intimacy and to understand something about her intimate experience that had previously confused her.

5.3.5 Emma. Emma was one of two Year 7 participants who did not mention digital spaces as sites of intimate exploration. Instead, Emma discussed in detail the many ways that she experienced intimacy through FTF and telephone contact with her 'Nan'. Her narrative about her intimate experiences indicated that she has a loving and supportive relationship with her 'Nan'. She explained, "with my Nan in my relationship, whenever I need her she's always there for me

and I'm always there for her" (Emma SF, 2016). Across her narrative, Emma described shopping adventures where her "Nan" bought her treats kept "secret" from her Pa. This simple story of familial intimacy suggests that Emma feels supported by her "Nan" but at the same time, her comments about her "Pa" hint toward tensions that exist within their family. Despite this tension, Emma presented as a bubbly young woman who laughed and joked a lot during the research process as she worked with her BFF Ava. Her bubbly and happy nature is evident in the screen shot from her film in Figure 12. During the 6.16 minutes of the video elicitation interview, Emma summarised her view of the qualities of intimate relationships as connections that contained "friendship, love, good bonds and yeah" (Ava VEI, 2016).

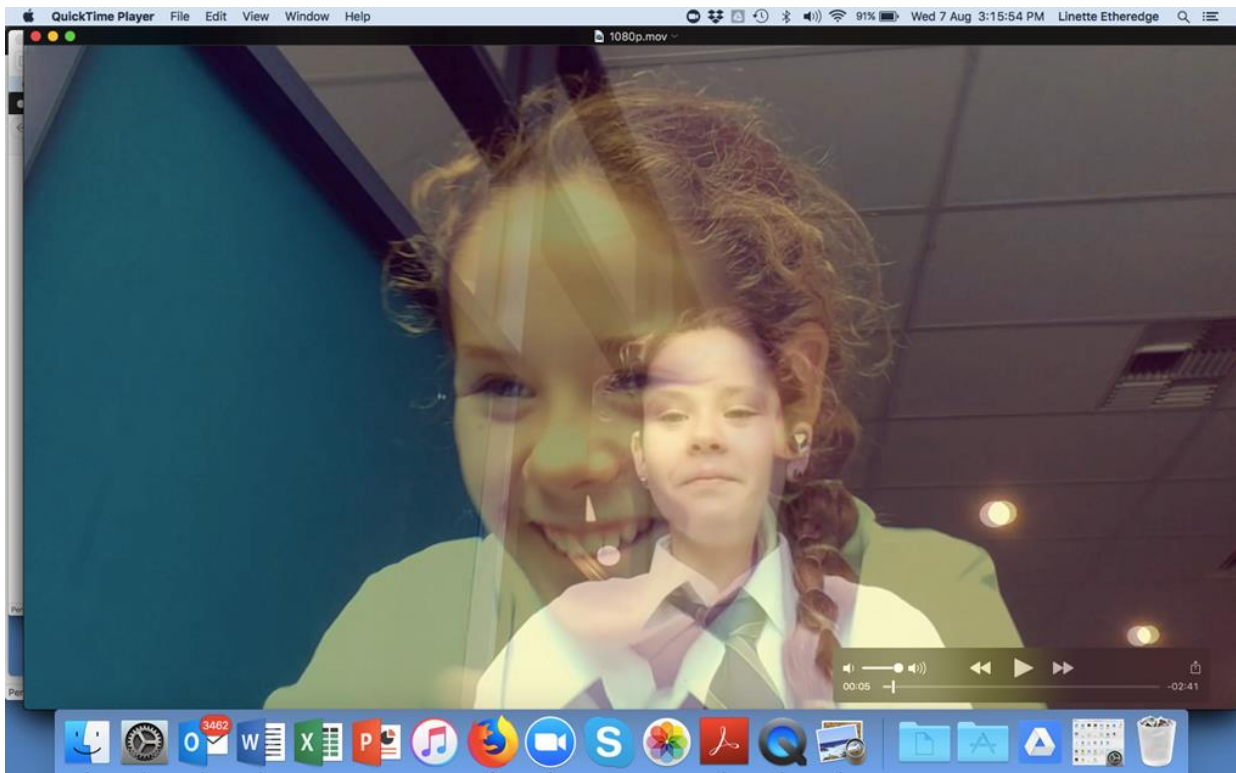


Figure 12. Emma

Emma constructed a short film that tells a story of an important intimate experience as a direct monologue to camera. Throughout the film, Emma sits in the middle of the frame in a mid-shot. Like several other Year 7 participants, Emma used colourful graphics to add a title that informed the viewer that they were about to watch her story. Throughout the film, Emma

managed the camera by placing it directly in front of her at a slightly lower level. From this position, Emma looked down, making full eye contact with the camera throughout the 2.48 minutes of her film. The narrative she conveyed in her short film meanders from stories about shopping to stories about talking on the telephone; prank calling her “Nan”, and making cakes to take to her. From the details of the narrative and the joyous expression on Emma’s face, it appears that the relationship she has with her “Nan” is a significant form of intimacy for her. In her final video elicitation interview, Emma talked about the description of her Nan as her favourite part of the film. When I asked her, “what is it about being with your Nan that you like” she answered, “because my Nan is silly, and she doesn’t really get that much things. And she like, we have such a great bond together” (Emma VEI, 2016). Her final comments reinforced the strong intimate connection that she has with her Nan and emphasises that for many young people, forms of intimacy involving family are highly significant.

5.3.6 Mia. Mia was the second of the 10 participants who did not mention any digital environments in the comments she offered across two films she made with her peers. In the first of these films made with Isabella and others, (Isabella et al. SF, 2016) she acted as the interviewer and asked four of the Year 7 participants a range of questions about intimate relationships. Due to her role as the interviewer in this short film, Mia revealed no insights or thoughts about her own experiences of intimacy. However, in the second film she made with Isabella (Isabella & Mia SF, 2016), Mia narrated several stories that illustrate she was confused about intimacy because she was living in a difficult and troubling family situation.

Prompted by questions from Isabella enquiring about her “family life”, Mia revealed that she was experiencing a series of complex and difficult family relationships at home. In this short film, Mia stated that she had not “seen my dad for 10 years and my mum she just like has a boyfriend right now” (Isabella & Mia SF, 2016). Mia described an intimate situation where she witnessed family violence describing it as “really like I think scary”. As Isabella asked further

questions, Mia revealed that she often acted to protect her little sister “when the big fights happen”. Her role as protector and comforter to her little sister was the intimate relationship Mia wanted or needed to talk about in the film. Mia described herself as the person “who like stops all the fights” (Isabella & Mia SF, 2016) but clearly the responsibility of her role at home troubled her. As her sad demeanour depicted in Figure 13 illustrates, Mia’s narrative about her intimate relationships was a story of a young woman protecting and consoling her sibling amidst the chaos created by family violence. Despite this dark tone, the film ends on a brighter note when Mia revealed that she had many friends who she talked to about her difficult home situation.

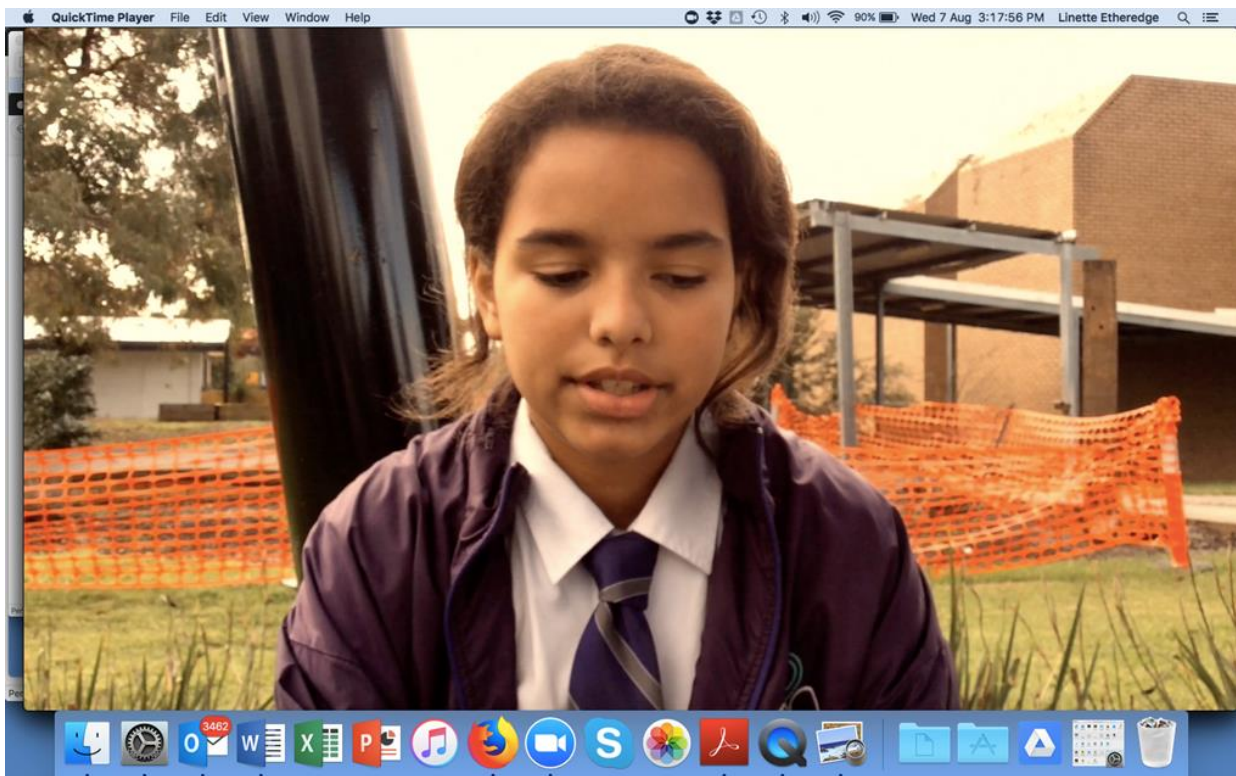


Figure 13. Mia

Her statement, “if my parents have a fight I would go talk to them, they would be the first people I would talk to” (Isabella & Mia SF, 2016), indicates that Mia’s friends provided the intimacy and support she needed to help her deal with the difficult family life she described.

The visual aspects of Mia’s film conveyed many important ideas about her experience of intimacy. Isabella and Mia chose to be outside in the yard away from all of the other participants

to make their film. Throughout the 3.17 minutes of this film, Mia sat on a seat in the centre of the frame in a close up shot. For most of the film, she looked down at her hands, or if not looking down her eyes darted around, avoiding both contact with Isabella who was interviewing her, and the camera housed within the digital device they were using. While Mia discussed her difficult family situation, she looked sad. However, when the conversation moved to a discussion about her pet dog and the support she got from her friends, Mia smiled and became animated.

Mia's conversation on film did not mention intimacy in digital environments. For this reason, her data were not analysed in any detail across the discussion chapters. However, I engaged extensively with Mia's data during the initial diffractive analysis process because her story moved me and exposed my own vulnerabilities and recollections of moments of fear in childhood. The following example from the diffractive writing process, offers an insight into the affective nature of Mia's data.

I know I am keeping a distance because working with this data moves me so much that I feel like my emotions cannot be contained. ... I feel this piece. I want to cry as I write because to accept and admit that this work really moves me is to be so in the process that I am outside my contained, controlled self, and entering the territory of the authentic, uncensored self that feels deeply. Perhaps, too deeply in this process (Diffractive writing process 17/1/18 LE).

Unfortunately, I was unable to record a video elicitation interview with Mia, or to say goodbye to her, because she moved away from the school during the school holidays before the Year 7 video elicitation interviews were conducted.

5.4 Conclusion

The contextual profiles presented in this chapter offer an insight into the individual experiences of intimacy described by 10 young people aged 11-14. These profiles offer a sense that young people are experiencing intimacy in the form of connections of attraction, connections with family, friends and pets. For all but two of the participants, the experiences of intimacy

discussed across their films occurred in a range of digital environments. The personal details and the descriptions of their filmmaking experience documented in this section, illustrated the range of ways the participants engaged with the camera, their peers, and the creative process of making films. The insights gained from these contextual profiles frame the individual data instances analysed and discussed in Chapters 6, 7 and 8, and they offer an additional layer of understanding to explore the primary research question of how young people aged 11-14 experienced intimacy across digital environments.

Chapter 6: Locations of Intimacy

6.1 Introduction

In this first data discussion chapter, I identify the various locations where the 10 participants explored intimacy and demonstrate how digital locations contributed to the shape and form of eight of 10 participants' experiences of intimacy. I then consider data relating to specific digital locations including Facebook (Section 6.3) and Kik (Section 6.4). The analysis of data relating to locations of intimacy provides insight into the way participants who self-identified as male, and who self-identified as female, used different digital locations to explore intimacy. Across these discussions, I engage with the concepts of the queer child growing sideways (Stockton, 2009) and digital intimate publics (Dobson et al. 2018a) to theorise the intimate and digital experiences of a small number of young people outside normative framings of risk and harm. These discussions begin to address the primary research question that seeks to understand how young people aged 11-14 experienced intimacy through their explorations in digital environments. To begin, I present data identifying the locations of intimacy discussed in the participants' short films in Table 3.

6.2 Locations of Intimacy

I begin to discuss the locations of intimacy by summarising data from all participants presented in Table 3, before analysing a data instance from Jackson and Lucas in more detail. In the first section of this chapter, I focus on data from two of the three male participants because their data illustrates usage patterns of other users, and because the intimate lives of young men are often over looked in studies exploring the intimate or sexual lives of young people (Coy & Horvath, 2019; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015). Table 3 identifies that eight of the 10 participants discussed experiences of intimacy explored in digital locations in their short films. Table 3 also illustrates that four of these eight participants discussed physical FTF locations as sites of

intimacy in addition to digital locations. Of the 10 participants, only two young women in Year 7 did not mention digital locations in their narratives. Emma's experience of intimacy occurred over the telephone and through FTF contact with her "Nan". Similarly, Mia experienced intimacy through FTF contact in her home. Given the focus of this study was to understand how young people explored intimacy through digital environments, Emma and Mia's narratives were not discussed in any detail across the analysis chapters. Instead, my intention is to explore their intimate experiences in future publications.

Table 3

Locations of Intimacy

Participant pseudonym and year level in ()	Number of intimate connections	Digital location discussed	Specific SNS/IMS	Digital and FTF locations	FTF only	SNS/IMS mentioned but not discussed
Sophia (8)	1	√	Facebook	Facebook and FTF		
Sophia	1	√	Facebook	FTF at school Facebook		
Sophia	1		Unspecified location			
Jackson (8)	1	√	Kik			Facebook, Skype Instagram,
Jackson	Group chat	√	Kik			
Aiden (8)	1	√	Unspecified messaging site			Instagram, Twitter, Snap Chat, Kik,
Lucas (8)	1	√	Kik Facebook Kik	Kik/FTF at school, Facebook to Kik		
Riley (7)	1	√	Facebook	Facebook/F TF at home		
Isabella (7)	1	√	Facebook			
Isabella	1	√	Facebook			
Ava (7)	1	√	Facebook	Facebook/F TF at the park		
Ava	1					Unspecified
Olivia (7)	1	√	Instagram			

Emma (7)	1	FTF	Telephone
Mia (7)	1	FTF	Home

Across data obtained from 13 self-directed short films, each of the participants discussed the location where their intimate experience took place. Data in Table 3 indicate that eight of the 10 participants used a digital location to engage in 13 of the 15 intimate connections discussed in their films. Across the films, participants Sophia, Jackson, Lucas, Riley, Isabella and Ava, discussed intimate experiences on Facebook, while Jackson, Aiden and Lucas discussed intimate experiences on Kik. Only one participant, Olivia, discussed the image-sharing site of Instagram. Aiden mentioned Snapchat and Twitter in a longer list of digital sites, while Jackson discussed talking to friends and family at a distance on the video app Skype. Across the eight participants who mentioned digital locations, the locations of Facebook, Instagram and Kik were discussed more frequently than any other digital location. Of these three digital locations, Facebook was referred to most often with six participants mentioning it and five identifying it as a site where they explored intimacy with people previously unknown to them. In relation to Instagram, Olivia a participant in Year 7, discussed it in detail, while Jackson and Aiden, both in Year 8, mentioned it in passing in a more extensive list of digital sites they used to explore intimacy. All three male participants discussed Kik with Jackson and Lucas referring to their experiences of exploring intimacy in detail. None of the female participants referred to Kik at all in their films. To consider the way two young men discussed digital locations, I explore a data instance from a film created by Jackson and Aiden.

Aiden and Jackson documented a range of digital locations where they explored intimacy. They discussed ideas about their intimate experiences in an interview format they developed as they worked together on their short film in the schoolyard.

Aiden So, we're basically telling ourselves about sexual relationships, like intimate, brothers and sisters, close friends, girlfriend and boyfriends 'n' etc.

Jackson On a digital space, AKA, that means like Facebook.

Aiden Instagram

Jackson Yeah, all that stuff.

Aiden Twitter, Snapchat, Kik etc.

Jackson Yeah, pretty much, yeah, ok where do we start?

Aiden All the different spaces. [...]

Aiden Jackson, how do you feel about relationships between friends, close friends, childhood friends?

Jackson Well, they're pretty close and you'll probably talk to 'em a lot. It's not bad at all like of course like you get to talk to them like, even from a distance you can still talk to them on like Facebook, Instagram, Skype (Jackson & Aiden SF, 2016).

In this data, Aiden identified various forms of intimacy. These forms included "sexual relationships, like intimate" relationships and the people involved in these intimate exchanges including "brothers and sisters, close friends, girlfriend and boyfriends". He also listed digital sites of intimacy including Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat and Kik while Jackson mentioned Facebook, Instagram and Skype as the digital locations where he explored intimacy.

The online locations listed by Aiden and Jackson serve as a list that accurately identified the applications or platforms mentioned by all eight participants who discussed digital locations as sites of intimate exploration. Aiden's comment about the different types of intimacy highlighted that intimacy is associated with both sexual and non-sexual relationships. Aiden's opening statement of "so, we're basically telling ourselves about sexual relationships, like intimate, brothers and sisters, close friends, girlfriend and boyfriends 'n' etc.", documented the types of intimacy he explored across a range of digital locations, and the people with whom he engaged in intimacy. The list of digital locations mentioned in Table 3 and highlighted by Jackson and Aiden, suggested that the eight participants who used digital environments to explore intimacy formed a range of intimate connections on "Facebook", "Kik" "Instagram" and all the "different spaces" mentioned across the data captured on film.

Data in Table 3 and the instance above suggest that participants engaged in exploring intimacy across a range of SMP where they could learn about various forms of intimacy. As Aiden questioned Jackson about relationships asking him "how do you feel about relationships", Jackson identified communicating with friends and that he would "probably talk to 'em a lot" as one way he maintained his intimate life online. Jackson's process of talking on Facebook, Instagram and Skype appeared to have provided him with opportunities to experience intimate connections that he described as "pretty good". Jackson's comments also suggest he learned that intimacy occurs "even at a distance" through his engagement in the digital intimate publics, he formed across multiple digital sites.

Data in Table 3 suggest that these young people under 15 years of age explored intimacy in digital environments more frequently than in FTF locations. These findings are consistent with the arguments of Jamieson (2013) and Chambers (2013a) who stated that personal relationships are increasingly explored through engagement in digital technology rather than through "domestic or family settings" (Chambers, 2013a, p. 40). In addition, the broad range of SNS,

SMP and IMS mentioned by eight of the 10 participants, resonates with recent studies by Hart (2018); Hendry (2016); Newett, Churchill, and Robards (2018) who identified that young people explored intimacy across an array of SMP. Most importantly as the discussions in subsequent sections of this chapter demonstrate, data in Table 3 indicate that the majority of participants used digital locations to explore intimacy in ways that were different from research participants whose experiences were analysed in previous studies (Hart, 2015; Hendry, 2016; Newett et al., 2018). These differences relate to four female participants using Facebook to make intimate connections with unknown young men and two male participants using Kik to explore a range of digital intimate connections.

Data in Table 3 suggest the young people in this study are exploring intimacy across multiple digital locations for different reasons. Data produced by eight participants who used digital locations to explore intimacy resonates with the emerging theory of “polymedia” (Madianou & Miller, 2013, p. 170). The term polymedia conceptualises the use of technology and digital media as affected by “social and emotional concerns” (Madianou & Miller, 2013, p. 171), rather than being driven by the constraints of particular technology platforms. When understood as integrated technological and social environments, digital and media platforms afford users opportunities and spaces to express emotions and manage relationships. As data in Table 3 illustrates, eight of 10 participants used numerous SMP to explore interpersonal communication across a range of intimate connections and differing digital locations. The narratives of these eight participants illustrate the point Madianou and Miller (2013) make that the notion of polymedia recognises the agency of individual users who avail themselves of multiple technologies to engage in interpersonal communications and to form intimate attachments.

Aiden and Jackson’s comments also identify them as young people with a rich and broad notion of intimacy that extends beyond sexual intimacy to include family and friends. Their comments illustrate how they are young people queered by the notion of childhood innocence

(Stockton, 2009). According to Stockton (2009), the young person queered by innocence is the normative child perceived as lacking an intimate life who seeks release from the constraints of “parental and state” (Stockton, 2009, p. 45) control through sideways relations and acts of sideways growth.

Stockton (2009) argued that children and young people grow through sideways relations and movements rather than a developmental notion of upward growth characterised by a “slow unfolding” (p. 4) toward adulthood. In contrast to the developmental idea of gradual growth, she posits that sideways movements often involve “escaping through, but being bound to, media” (Stockton, 2009, p. 45). Data from Aiden and Jackson illustrate Stockton’s (2009) point that digital media applications offered these young people opportunities for movement and growth during periods of managed delay. Furthermore, their comments about their intimate explorations hint at the many ways that digital media sites and digital practices facilitated opportunities for sideways growth. Their exploration of intimacy across a broad range of digital locations also illustrates Stockton (2009) claim for recognising the strange nature of all children who in modern times are “by definition strange, and getting stranger, in the eyes of the grown-ups who define” (p. 3) them.

Viewed through the lens of digital intimate publics, data indicate that the participants felt a sense of belonging in a range of different digital locations that many adults find difficult to understand (Kang & Rosenthal, 2014). According to Dobson, Robards, et al. (2018), digital intimate publics are digital spaces where groups or individuals develop intimate connections through a sense of belonging and the process of sharing common ideas and experiences. Data in Table 3, and in the instance from Jackson and Aiden, illustrate that digital intimate publics were spaces where these young people, recognised as marginalised people, explored intimacy in a range of forms that are different from heterosexual and reproductive forms of intimacy.

Explorations within digital intimate publics occurred in environments where the rules of engagement are less restrictive. The rules of engagement are less restrictive in digital intimate public spaces because the boundaries and practices associated with normative notions of intimacy are constantly questioned, challenged and potentially redefined there (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). Less rigid spaces of intimate exploration are important for young people aged 11-14 because outside digital intimate publics, rules and obligations frame their intimate and digital lives as problematic (Albury, 2015; Byron & Albury, 2018; Dobson, 2018; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015). Thinking about digital intimate publics as creative sites of learning, rather than sites of risk and harm (Dobson, 2018), offers a different way to consider how these young people learned about intimacy, and how they grew sideways through their explorations across a range of digital platforms. Linking these ideas to Stockton's (2009) notion of sideways growth, data indicate that certain digital intimate publics supported four of the young female participants in their explorations and sideways growth more than the young male participants. In order to understand how various digital intimate publics formed around these four young women, I examine data considering how they explored their intimate lives on Facebook.

6.3 Making Intimate Connections on Facebook

In this section, I analyse data discussing the digital location of Facebook to consider how four participants explored intimacy with young men previously unknown to them. To begin I offer a brief overview of Facebook to contextualise this particular SMP as a SNS.

6.3.1 Facebook. Facebook is a popular SNS founded in 2004 by Mark Zuckerberg. In 2019, the official Facebook website noted that every day, "1.59 billion" users are active on the site (Facebook, 2019). According to its mission statement, Facebook's purpose is to "give people the power to build community and bring the world closer together"(Facebook, 2019). In the editorial of a special issue on Facebook in *New Media & Society*, Lincoln and Robards (2014) identified the many positive ways that Facebook has changed how people communicated across

the world. However, they also acknowledged criticisms of the site associated with issues of “privacy and transparency” (Lincoln & Robards, 2014, p. 1047). There is an extensive academic scholarship focusing on Facebook (Caers et al., 2013; Lambert, 2013; Lincoln & Robards, 2014) that predominately explored the way users engaged with Facebook to connect with friends and family. These studies, showed that Facebook is recognised as a site where people connect with friends and family, reconnect with lost friends, share memories, document daily activities (Robards et al., 2018), and stay connected to family when living and working in another country (Cabalquinto, 2018). Despite extensive and varied research, there is little discussion of the way young women under 15 use Facebook to make intimate connections or explore intimacy. The following exploration of data begins to address this gap and in doing so contributes new understandings to the field of digital intimacy studies.

6.3.2 Gendered spaces of exploration. Facebook was the most common SNS mentioned across data. Table 3 highlights that four female participants identified Facebook as the digital location where they experienced intimacy, and the site where only one male participant made a brief intimate connection. Although data in Table 3 identified that Facebook was the preferred site for Sophia, Riley, Isabella and Ava, it did not identify that the intimate connections made there were with people unknown to them. To illustrate this point, I analyse data from Riley, Isabella and Sophia before introducing a contrasting narrative from Lucas who briefly discussed Facebook in his short film.

Riley explained how she explored intimacy on Facebook in the opening moments of a film she made on her own.

Now, I’ll be talking about an intimate relationship which started on Facebook, but it turned out he was in the same year level and my next-door neighbour’s girlfriend’s son. We decided to keep in contact for one week and then we just decided to leave it as best friend [pause] sort of [pause] and then my brother invited him to stay at my house. So [pause] it was kind ‘a’ awkward (Riley SF, 2016).

Isabella also talked about Facebook as the digital location where she explored intimacy.

I'm going to tell you a story what happened with me on social media. So, um, this guy, I didn't even know, um he added me on Facebook, and um I added him back. So, and then he asked me out for some reason. I don't even know him, and um, then he started calling me names and stuff (Isabella SF, 2016).

In addition, Sophia began her film by identifying the important role Facebook played in her numerous experiences of intimacy.

Well, ok, so, it all started on Facebook, which is pretty weird but um, yeah. It started on Facebook, and we started, oh my god I started talking to this guy on Facebook and um, well we kind of fell. We kind of fell for each other on Facebook, if you know what I mean. Um. We just started talking every night and day 24/7, and like it was good, and all and we'd been talking for like about two weeks, and I knew he went to my school, but we had never really talked at school. It was just a, you know, a Facebook relationship, I guess (Sophia SF, 2016).

Finally, Lucas' narrative offered a contrast to the three female participants' experiences of exploring intimacy on Facebook.

And then, the next day at school, she gave the boy Facebook a request. And then, the boy accepted it. And they started talking over Facebook. And then they moved over to Kik, cause you can delete the messages (Lucas SF, 2016).

Data from Riley, Isabella and Sophia identified they formed digital intimate publics on Facebook where they explored intimacy with young men. Facebook's role as a digital location where these young women engaged in heterosexual forms of intimacy is evident in the way Sophia and Riley both report that their intimate relationships "started" on Facebook. Sophia said it all "started on Facebook, which is pretty weird" while Riley introduced Facebook by saying, "I'll be talking about an intimate relationship which started on Facebook". Similarly, Isabella identified Facebook as a site of intimate connection when she narrated a story explaining that, "this guy, I didn't even know, um he added me on Facebook, and um I added him back".

For Riley, Isabella and Sophia, Facebook offered the opportunity to explore intimacy in quite different ways. Riley's comment indicated that her experience of intimacy "started on Facebook" and continued through keeping "in contact for one week". It appears that "contact" for Riley meant digital contact on Facebook because she later revealed that when she met the "next-door neighbour's girlfriend's son" at her "house" the FTF experience of intimacy was "kind 'a' awkward". Riley's data suggest the intimate experience of being in contact over Facebook was better for her than the "awkward" experience of meeting in person. Similarly, Isabella's data suggest her experience of intimacy was uncomfortable for different reasons. Her comment of, "he asked me out for some reason. I don't even know him", suggests she accepted the invitation to connect on Facebook from a person who she did not know. It appears that this experience troubled Isabella, because her statement "um then he started calling me names and stuff" indicated that she was thinking about this moment of abuse as she recalled her experience of intimacy on film. These two experiences of intimacy on Facebook differ significantly from Sophia's experience of digital intimacy that was both pleasing and somewhat disappointing.

In a film that was much longer than all the other participants' films, Sophia described how an intense form of intimacy developed on Facebook through "talking every night and day 24/7". For Sophia, talking facilitated a pleasing level of intimacy because she made a connection between talking extensively and feeling a deep intimate connection. The intimate bond produced through engagement in "talking to this guy" was evident when Sophia reported that "well, we kind of fell. We kind of fell for each other on Facebook". While Sophia's account documented how her intimate connection evolved through "24/7" communication, the discussion of her feeling that she "fell" for the guy, offered a deeper understanding of the intimacy she formed on Facebook.

Sophia's intense communication on Facebook generated an experience she described as "good and all". By contrast, Lucas' experience on Facebook was in response to a request he

described in the following way. “And then, the next day at school, she gave the boy Facebook a request”. Lucas’ following comment that “they moved over to Kik, cause you can delete the messages”, suggests that Facebook did not provide him with the functionality he desired in order to explore intimacy. Although Lucas did not elaborate on why he wanted to delete messages, his desire to move from Facebook to Kik identified that the ability to delete intimate communications was important to him. Lucas’ move “to Kik” indicated that Kik was his preferred digital location to engage in intimate communication. Across data obtained from all the other films, no other male or female participants discussed the issue of deleting messages at any time. These contrasting narratives suggest that the desired functionality in a digital intimate public was different for participants of varying genders.

In recent years, numerous scholars have documented that Facebook is a SNS used by people of all ages to engage in personal and commercial connectivity (Caers et al., 2013; Chambers, 2017; Lambert, 2016; Robards, 2012; Robards et al., 2018). Data generated by the six participants’, who mentioned Facebook in their films, supported findings from previous studies highlighting that personal connections are common on Facebook. However, Facebook was used by four of these young people aged 11-14 as a site for exploring intimacy. The four female participants’ use of Facebook was different from older users of the platform whose practices were documented in studies conducted by Robards et al. (2018), Lambert (2016) and Chambers (2017). In these three studies, participants reported that the connections they made on Facebook were primarily with people they already knew, while this was not the case for four of the five participants who discussed Facebook in this study. In contrast to the studies conducted by Robards et al. (2018) Lambert (2016) and Chambers (2017), four female participants identified that Facebook offered them an opportunity to explore intimacy with young men who were previously unknown to them. Facebook also gave participants like Sophia a site to grow sideways. She achieved this sideways growth through developing intimacy by sharing ideas and

experiences and expressing “shared worldviews and shared emotions” (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 5) with others across the platform.

Facebook was a digital location where intimacy developed and opportunities for sideways growth occurred. Sophia’s comment that “we just started talking every night and day 24/7” suggests that intimacy occurred on Facebook through the processes of engaging in intense digital communication. Stockton (2009) argued that talking can be a form of sexual delay, but it can also be “suffused with pleasure” (p. 63) because talking about the joys and pains of everyday life often acts as intimacy or a “sexy bond among teens” (p. 63). Sophia’s narrative suggests that her experience of “talking” generated intimacy on Facebook, where she was able to explore and experience intimacy in ways not possible in person “because I knew he went to my school, but we had never really talked at school”. In this comment, Sophia identified that her communication on Facebook was a way of exploring intimacy during a time of intimate delay where talking at school was not possible for reasons undisclosed. The fact that Sophia gained pleasure from the act of talking on Facebook, demonstrates one of the many ways that communicating through digital locations can challenge intimate delay, and therefore, facilitate opportunities for sideways growth (Stockton, 2009).

However, at the same time as Sophia acknowledged the pleasure she received from talking to “the guy” on Facebook, her comments suggest the intimate experience disrupted her understanding of how intimacy might evolve outside a digital environment. The ambivalent nature of Sophia’s experience of intimacy resonates with Bollmer’s (2018) notion that intimacy can be “unbearable” (p. 49). Drawing on Berlant and Edelman’s (2014) notion that intimacy both overwhelms and anchors people, Bollmer (2018) argued that experiences of intimacy are full of promise, yet tainted with the separation that underpins all intimate connections. Sophia’s conflicted experience of intense digital intimacy and her knowledge that “it was just a, you know, a Facebook relationship, I guess,” illustrated that digital intimate publics such as Facebook are

active and evolving spaces where learning about intimacy can occur through exploration and engagement in practices of sharing the self (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). Her comment that it was “just” a relationship on Facebook also illustrates a disappointing experience of intimacy can offer moments of growth that occur to the side of normative expectations or patterns of intimacy (Stockton 2009).

Sophia, Riley and Isabella’s comments suggested that digital intimate publics on Facebook facilitated explorations of intimacy with previously unknown young men. However, when considered through the concept of the queer child growing sideways (Stockton, 2009) the participants’ comments suggest three additional important points. Firstly, data illustrated that these three young women were actively engaged in exploring intimacy on Facebook. This data identifies their status as young people queered by innocence. Their activities on Facebook demonstrated that they are young people queered by innocence because they were normatively framed as innocent and yet, the data illustrate that they were actively involved in exploring and producing their intimate lives online (Stockton, 2009). Secondly, their participation in the process of exploring digital intimacy points to their willingness to engage intimately with young men who, although in similar social circles, were unknown to them. These explorations into intimacy offer examples of the kinds of sideways relations that Stockton (2009) argued can facilitate sideways growth. Therefore, these young women’s intimate engagements on Facebook, supported sideways movement and sideways growth.

The forms of digital intimacy described on Facebook, indicate that four of the young women in this study were exploring and experiencing heteronormative forms of intimacy on Facebook. Their intimate digital behaviours suggest that these young female users preferred to explore intimacy within the digital intimate publics they were creating on Facebook, rather than in person. By contrast, data obtained from Lucas suggested that Facebook was not a site where he wanted to engage in intimate communications. Instead, his data instance indicated that the IMS of

Kik was the site where he preferred to engage in intimacy. This finding suggests that the digital intimate publics forming on Facebook are evolving and changing as younger female users develop their own intimate practices when using the platform. In the next section, I analyse data from Jackson and Lucas who explored intimacy on Kik.

6.4 Sideways Relations on Kik

In this section, I consider how Kik functioned as a digital intimate public where two participants, who self-identified as young men, explored their intimate lives. Given the scarcity of literature discussing Kik, I begin with a description of this IMS based on findings from a forensic study conducted by Ovens and Morison (2016).

6.4.1 Kik. Kik is an IMS launched in 2010. In the first study to undertake a “detailed forensic analysis of Kik on Apple iOS devices” (p. 41), Ovens and Morison (2016) reported that Kik had over 200 million users with forty percent identified as “American youth” (p. 40). Ovens and Morison (2016) provided no details about the genders of users. However, they identified four key reasons why Kik is popular with young people. Firstly, Kik’s registration processes are quick, with little identity verification required to establish an account. Even though the Kik registration process states that users must be 13 years old, Ovens and Morison (2016) argued that limited validation processes make it “easy for younger users to enter a fake date of birth and begin communication immediately” (p. 41). Secondly, Kik is popular because connections form in organic and rapid ways. These types of connections allow users to connect instantly with individuals or groups through usernames or the “hashtag of public groups they wish to join” (Ovens & Morison, 2016, p. 43). Thirdly, Kik is unique because up to 50 members in an invited private group, or an open public group, can chat at the same time (Ovens & Morison, 2016). Finally, Kik is popular because it “provides users with the option to delete” (Ovens & Morison, 2016, p. 46) both contacts and conversations from chats and contact displays. For these reasons, intimacy can be explored on Kik through connections that form rapidly (Ovens & Morison,

2016). Although the ability to begin intimate connections immediately is one of Kik's desired features, this aspect of its functionality also presents challenges for some users. In the next section, I analyse how the digital intimate publics that formed on Kik offered Lucas and Jackson challenging opportunities to develop and explore intimacy in a range of different forms.

6.4.2 Creating and deleting intimate traces. Two of the three male participants identified Kik as an important digital location where they explored intimacy. As outlined in Table 3, data from Aiden, Lucas and Jackson indicated that Kik was the second most common digital location discussed during the study. However, Kik was not an IMP discussed by any female participant. To explore the male participants' experiences on Kik, I consider Lucas and Jackson's narratives in detail.

Lucas discussed his intimate experiences on Kik in a short film he made on his own. He recalled the way he used Kik to undertake a challenging form of intimate communication.

Then one day over Kik the boy messaged the girl trying to say that he wants to break up with her, but instead it make the girl like him more (Lucas SF, 2016).

In the next data instance from a short film that Jackson made with Aiden, Jackson identified what happened when he explored intimacy with unknown others on Kik.

So, my story, I was on a chat on Kik. I deleted it a while back after I realised it was a pretty bad app. Like for paedophile reasons. But yeah paedophiles are bad. Yeah. Don't trust Kik, just saying (Jackson & Aiden SF, 2016).

Although both Lucas and Jackson identified Kik as the site where they explored intimacy, the forms of intimacy they discussed differed significantly. In Lucas' data, he recalled that he began messaging a girl in the digital location of Kik to avoid a difficult and complicated FTF relationship. As discussed briefly in Section 6.3.2, Lucas moved from Facebook to Kik because Kik offered him the ability to control and remove his intimate communication through its deleting function. However, as the data instance above illustrates, Kik also offered him a digital

environment where he attempted to “break up” with the girl involved in his story. Lucas’ comments illustrate how he used Kik as a digital testing ground to undertake the difficult task of breaking up with the girl. However, he explained that his “break up” message was misunderstood when he revealed that the message, “make the girl like him more”.

Lucas’ comments highlighted the potential affordances of Kik. However, the reality of what happened after he sent the message illustrated that intimate engagements on Kik also had constraints. His admission of failed communication offers an insight into the difficulty one young man faced when exploring intimacy within digital intimate publics. The difficulties of engaging intimately on Kik were primarily associated with miscommunication and the confusion Lucas experienced because of this miscommunication. By contrast, Jackson’s narrative about an intimate experience on Kik highlighted that he encountered a difficult form of intimate growth when he engaged with unknown others. When Jackson stated that Kik “was a pretty bad app, like for paedophile reasons,” he identified that the intimate connections he formed on Kik were “bad” and unacceptable to him. However, rather than frightening him, Jackson’s response to this incident suggests that he learned to consider and act upon his feelings about unwanted intimacy through his experience on Kik.

There are many ways to interpret Jackson’s experience of intimacy on Kik. Jackson’s experience of recognising paedophiles on Kik, resonates with Jamieson’s (2013) comments about the problematic nature of engaging intimately with people online who are unknown, unseen and potentially untrustworthy. It also illustrates a point made by Ovens and Morison (2016) that crimes of “child abuse” (p. 40) have grown as Kik’s popularity has increased among young users who sign up using “fake” (p. 41) profile details. However, as Naezer and Ringrose (2019) pointed out, for some young people the experience that adults frame as harmful can often be processed, discussed or dismissed in other ways. Through a sideways conceptualisation of growth, Jackson’s

response to his experience on Kik illustrates how the adult, normative framing of growth through a “risk and harm paradigm” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 419) can be problematised.

Jackson’s data illustrates that he had the potential to grow to the side of normative expectations of the helpless innocent child framed by concerns over risk and harm in a range of different and individual ways. Jackson’s process of removing himself from Kik both aligns with and differs from practices discussed by “young people aged 12-18 in the Netherlands” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 424) who participated in a study exploring the way young people navigate social systems online and offline. The young women in Naezer and Ringrose’s (2019) study reported that they disconnected from “unpleasant” chats with “dirty men” on sites such as “Chatlokaal” and “Chatroulette” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 425) that they described as both unpleasant and amusing. That some girls in their study thought encountering “dirty men” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 425) was amusing, offers a different view of this kind of encounter from Jackson’s experience on Kik. By contrast, his encounter was not recalled with the “hilarity” (p. 425) described by the young women in Naezer and Ringrose’s (2019) study. Instead of finding the experience amusing, Jackson recalled his “bad” experience as a serious one leading him to conclude that Kik was a “pretty bad app”. This required Jackson to reassess his experiences of intimacy on Kik.

Jackson’s experience could also be understood as an example of growth occurring through the kinds of non-normative or “sideways relations” that Stockton (2009) argued facilitates growth in young people who are creating “sidelong movements of their own” (p. 5). Jackson’s engagement with people he identified as “paedophiles”, offers an example of sidelong movement and forms of connection Stockton (2009) might have defined in terms of sideways relations. She argued that it is often through sideways relations with unacceptable peoples that young people develop in directions not usually associated with intimate growth. Jackson’s engagement with the “paedophiles” on Kik appears to have facilitated a sideways movement where he learned to take

actions to disengage from people in a digital intimate public that did not support him or his desired form of intimate connection. His narrative suggests that through this experience, Jackson developed an understanding of the types of people and the types of digital locations that he could not trust as he explored his intimate life online.

Through his engagement on Kik, Jackson explored the important role that trust played in his intimate life, and the circumstances needed to make decisions about whom he could trust. Most importantly, when Jackson said “Yeah don’t trust Kik just saying” it became evident that digital intimate publics on Kik offered him the opportunity to engage in sideways growth where he learned to trust his feelings about whom he felt safe to explore intimacy with online (Stockton 2009). Viewed through another queer lens, Stockton's (2009) notion of “sideways bonding” (p. 53) might be helpful to explore Jackson’s encounter with unknown persons on Kik. Sideways bonding between “men and boys” (Stockton, 2009, p. 53) often occurs when both individuals are making the most of the period of “painful delay” (p. 53) that frames the learning processes of many young people. Stockton (2009) argued that these sideways relations and non-normative bonds between man and boy can often provide young people with ways to express, explore and learn about their intimate lives through the “game of delay” (p. 53). Through the process of engaging in exploring intimacy within the digital location of Kik, Jackson began to develop personal rules that helped him to guide his future intimate explorations online. Through his experience of sideways bonding on Kik, Jackson appears to have worked through his need to conform to social conventions to develop an understanding of his personal rules that created clarity about who he could trust and who he could not trust as he explored his intimate life on Kik.

Jackson’s narrative also provided an example of how the digital intimate public spaces that formed on Kik became “queer spaces” (McGlotten, 2013, p. 4) where he explored forms of intimacy outside the usual rules of social engagement. Through the queer spaces on Kik, Jackson

developed a sense of his own agency and ability to enact disconnective practices (Light & Cassidy, 2014) to understand and create boundaries around intimacy and trust. An intimate experience that might otherwise be viewed through the current and normative framing of “paedophile hysteria” (Stockton, 2016, p. 514) facilitated an opportunity for Jackson to learn to trust himself and his decisions about where he felt comfortable to explore his intimate life and with whom. Through this process, Jackson appears to have actively engaged in a form of sideways growth (Stockton, 2009) that occurred during a self-managed learning process that gave him a sense of control and ability to learn to regulate and manage his experiences of intimacy online. The experimental learning that Jackson’s process of engaging and then disconnecting from Kik facilitated, appears to have given him a sense of control and capacity to regulate his experience of digital intimacy as they happened. Furthermore, through the work of evaluating and then removing himself from the experience, Jackson grew sideways through sideways relations with difficult and non-normative intimate connections in the queer spaces that formed around him on Kik (Stockton 2009).

Through a consideration of Lucas and Jackson’s experiences of intimacy on Kik, an understanding of the way digital intimate publics can function as sites “where the pedagogies of intimate life as life itself are learnt” (Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018, p. xx) became evident. The process of learning within digital intimate publics was also evident in Lucas’ comment that his attempt to break from his relationship by communicating on Kik “make the girl like him more”. His desire to avoid a difficult FTF experience of breaking up also resonates with findings from Jamieson (2013) and Newett et al. (2018) who both argued that young people often use digital locations to engage in intimacy when FTF intimacy is perceived as difficult or uncomfortable. Data from these two young men suggest that forms of uncomfortable intimacy produced movements and moments in time when sideways growth occurred (Stockton, 2009).

Data discussing intimacy on Kik identified the complicated processes that engagement within a digital intimate public generated for two young men. It also highlighted that the digital intimate publics that formed on Kik were spaces where participants learned about intimacy through “complex and ambivalent” (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 5) experiences explored on an IMS rarely discussed across the literature. The way these two young men in Year 8 at secondary school worked with their experiences of intimacy on Kik, suggests they were both developing capacity to navigate their way through difficult and sideways intimate relations. Jackson and Lucas’ data instances offered insight into how these two young men responded to difficult, unwanted or unexpected intimate experiences online outside the normative framing of risk and harm. Therefore, through a queered framing of complex and ambivalent intimate experiences it is possible to imagine that Kik offered these young people opportunities to engage in sideways relations that facilitated sideways growth (Stockton, 2009).

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reported a range of digital locations where experiences of intimacy occurred for eight of the 10 participants and the FTF sites where two other participants experienced intimacy. Through various SNS, SMP and one IMS, eight participants used digital locations to explore their intimate lives. Of these locations, Facebook was the most popular SNS where four female participants made new intimate connections and explored intimacy. Through their intimate practices on Facebook, these four female participants were constructing new ways to control and explore their intimate lives. By contrast, two of the three young men in this study preferred to explore intimacy on the IMS of Kik. The digital intimate publics that formed on Kik provided significant opportunities for sideways growth to occur due to the complex and ambivalent forms of intimacy experienced there. Through engagement in sideways relations, data indicated that Kik facilitated the establishment of digital intimate public spaces where important learning about trust and trustworthiness occurred.

Understood as spaces where explorations of intimacy can generate learning, digital intimate publics were conceptualised as sites of exploration, experimentation and potential learning. The learning that occurred within digital locations indicates that the participants engaged in the labour of forming and maintaining intimate connections across a range of digital locations. Through their intimate explorations within the digital intimate publics of Facebook and Kik, I have shown that eight participants grew sideways through the complexity of their experiences in digital environments. Through this sideways growth, these young people actively challenged the normative ideas of risk and harm that frame them as innocent and unable to navigate their intimate lives (Dobson, 2018; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015). Throughout this navigation process, individual personal rules and adherence to broader social conventions directed each participant's experience of intimacy. Next in Chapter 7, I explore data that highlights the behavioural practices of intimacy through investigating narratives describing moments of connecting, sharing and disconnecting across digital environments.

Chapter 7: Behavioural Practices of Intimacy

7.1 Introduction

In Chapter 6, I reported on the range of SMP and FTF locations where all 10 participants explored intimacy. In this second data analysis chapter, I expand upon the locations of intimacy to consider the behavioural practices of intimacy defined as connecting, sharing and disconnecting. As I explore these behavioural practices, I continue to engage with the concepts of the queer child growing sideways (Stockton, 2009) and digital intimate publics (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). These concepts offer alternative ways to think about how young people grow sideways through their intimate explorations in digital locations during periods of socially constructed delay framed by childhood innocence (Jarkovská & Lamb, 2019; Stockton, 2009).

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.3.1), the notion of delay is central to the concept of the queer child. A desire to protect the weak and guard the innocent child drives the normative desire to delay progress toward adulthood (Stockton, 2009). The sideways movements of the queer child are contrasted to the development of the normative child, who is characterised by delayed advancement toward adult understandings of intimacy and sexuality (Stockton, 2009). By examining the participants' behaviours of connecting, sharing and disconnecting, a complex and nuanced understanding of several young people's intimate lives became apparent. These discussions highlight a number of ways that participants' behavioural practices of intimacy challenge, disrupt and redefine normative and gendered understandings of young people's intimate and digital lives (Dobson et al. 2018b).

7.1.1 Behavioural practices of intimacy. Throughout the discussions in this chapter, I draw on data instances presented in Table 4. Data in Table 4 represents the thoughts and lived experiences of the eight participants who discussed digital locations in their short films. As explained in Chapter 6, five young women and three young men had experiences of intimacy that

developed through a range of behavioural practices undertaken across digital intimate publics. In Table 4, these behavioural practices of intimacy, identified during the thematic analysis of data, are categorised as acts of connecting, sharing and disconnecting.

Table 4

Behavioural Practices of Intimacy

Name	Connecting	Sharing	Disconnecting
Sophia (8)	"I started talking to this guy on Facebook."	"We just started talking every night and day 24/7." "We kind of fell, we kind of fell for each other on Facebook."	"He asked me out. I said yes it was a good relationship for about four weeks a month and um like It was git [legitimate]. I guess like we had a lot in common. We, well then we kind of fell apart. I had stuff going on at home, and I guess, well from his words he said he kind of lost feelings."
Jackson (8)	"Like, there are some friends that like, are friends of friends. So like, if you were friends of a friend, that was friends with me sometimes, like if you just wanted to, you'd probably friend me, randomly and I wouldn't know you."	"Yeah I was um, part of this group, and there was a girlfriend and boyfriend [...], So then they just made a group.... And then like, just made people join. So then they could help them with this, for random reasons. I don't know why."	"I was on a chat on Kik. I deleted it a while back, after I realised it was a pretty bad app. Like for paedophile reasons."
Aiden (8)	"I was messaging this girl."	"And I got a nude from her "I didn't really know how to react to it, but obviously, I was a boy, so I was intrigued." And then she was talking to me some more. And then she asked for one from me."	"But I refused to give her one."
Lucas (8)	"An one day the girl asked out the boy, and the boy was too nice to say no. Yeah. And so they ended up dating." "She gave the boy Facebook a request. And then the boy accepted it."	"and they started talking over Facebook." "over Kik, the boy messaged the girl trying to say that he wants to break up with her."	"and then they moved over to Kik cause you can delete the messages."
Riley (7)	"I'll be talking about an intimate relationship, which started on Facebook."	"We decided to keep in contact for one week. And then we just decided to leave it as best friends sort of."	"My brother tried to [pause] do something really bad. He tried to make us stay [pause], and I said no. And still today he's my best friend."

Name	Connecting	Sharing	Disconnecting
Isabella (7)	“So um this guy, I didn’t even know um he added me on Facebook. And um, I added him back.”	“We were talking and talking to each other on Facebook.”	“His best friend, which is my friend, asked me out. But I said no cause it’s kind of easy for a girl to say no.”
Ava (7)	“I have Facebook, and I met this guy.”	“And he told me where he lived, and I told him where I lived [...], and then we had a fight, and then we got along again, and then we had a fight again, and we got along, and then we dated.”	“And then we broke up. And then we dated again. And then we broke up.”
Olivia (7)	So last night on Instagram I had a request. Well two days ago, I had a request, and on that it was [I] didn’t know ‘em’, but I accepted it and I requested him and after I requested him he saw my photos then I saw his photos and then after at the start, I felt wait, am I doing the right thing?	“And then after um he liked all my photos but I didn’t really liked his photos, but I didn’t really want to, but I didn’t want [it] to be a stalker.”	“So this is what I usually do if um, I don’t know him. But if I’ve seen his photos and I don’t really know him, I’ll usually block him or anything block that person.”

Note. The first column identifies participants and their year level in ().

7.2 Connecting

Data instances in column one of Table 4, highlights the range of behavioural practices of connecting, that eight participants engaged in to form connections or to respond to invitations to connect within a digital environment. These connective behaviours illustrate that these eight young people explored connections of attraction, communication, comfort and acceptance in digital environments. Table 4 documents the language participants used to describe connecting behaviours. These linguistic markers illustrate the range of ways these young people described their behaviours of connection. Riley and Sophia used the word “started”, Olivia used the words “request” and “requested”, while Lucas used “asked out” “dating”, “request and accepted”. Isabella talked about being “added”, Aiden “was messaged”, Jackson used the phrase “friend me randomly” while Ava explained that she “met” the guy she connected with on Facebook. These differences in language suggest that intimate connections are occurring through individual behavioural practices that cannot be generalised across the participant group. Through an

exploration of several participants' comments, interesting gendered differences emerged in the way they talked about connecting online, and the kinds of people that they engaged with when forming these intimate connections.

Data instances in Table 4 indicate that seven of the eight participants formed digital connections with an individual previously unknown to them. Only Lucas' data suggests that he already knew the girl who "asked out the boy". Isabella's intimate connection started when a "guy" she did not know added her "on Facebook and um, I added him back". Riley and Sophia did not provide specifics about how their intimate connections began but simply acknowledged it "started on Facebook." Ava's explanation of her connective behaviour on Facebook and then in a FTF location employed language commonly associated with making a FTF connection. Ava said, "I have Facebook, and I met this boy, and I told him I'd meet him in the park". Ava's language choice illustrates that for her, meeting on Facebook is comparable to a FTF "meet" up in the park. Ava's narrative of intimacy also highlights how connections formed across digital environments and FTF locations. In total, an analysis of these eight films indicates that three of the five female participants, engaged in intimate connections across both digital locations and FTF locations. The connections that Sophia, Riley and Ava made on Facebook all moved from a digital environment to FTF connections. Although this pattern of connection was common for three female participants, it was not the experience of all female participants.

This overview of participants' connective behaviours, illustrate some of the ways these young people talked about making connections in digital environments. They also illustrate the kinds of people these participants connected with as they explored intimacy and grew sideways during a period of socially constructed intimate and sexual delay. Stockton (2009) argued that young people develop individual and often unusual practices to "craft sideways movements of their own" (p.5) during times when they are framed through the delay of innocence. The connective behaviours of messaging, meeting, accepting and talking online, suggest the many

possible ways that intimate connections facilitate sideways growth. Data in Table 4 illustrate the kinds of sideways relations Stockton (2009) argued young people need to grow to the side of the expected “slow unfolding” (p. 4) of normative notions of upward growth. The participants’ experiences of sideways growth that occurred through individual behavioural practices of exploring intimate connections were unique and highly subjective.

The subjective behaviours and responses reported by the participants and outlined in Table 4, resonate with the experiences of young people described in studies conducted by Byron and Albury (2018), Naezer (2018) and Hart (2018). In particular, Naezer (2018) acknowledged the subjective nature of young people’s notions of risk and pleasure that influenced their behavioural practices of connection, and how they responded to the connective digital practices of others. These subjective responses also serve to illustrate Pallotta-Chiarolli and Pease’s (2013) argument that subjectivity develops through performative action and lived experience. The range of behaviours of connecting discussed by the participants suggest that opportunities for sideways growth are highly subjective and navigated in unique ways as young people engage in practices of exploring their intimate lives online. To explore the different ways that young people grow sideways through connective behaviours, I analyse two data instances from Table 4 in detail. The first offers an insight into Olivia’s motivation for connecting on Instagram through the practice of sharing photographs.

7.2.1 Connecting through photographs. Olivia described viewing photographs as the behavioural practice she used when making intimate connections on Instagram. In the only discussion of Instagram in this study, Olivia described her behavioural practice of checking or looking at photographs as a process she undertook to assess the suitability of a possible intimate connection.

So last night on Instagram I had a request. Well two days ago, I had a request, [...] didn’t know ‘em’, but I accepted it and I requested him and after I requested him he saw my

photos then I saw his photos and then after at the start, I felt, wait, am I doing the right thing? And then after um he liked all my photos but I didn't really liked his photos, but I didn't really want to, but I didn't want [it] to be a stalker. [...] So, this is what I usually do if um, I don't know him but if I've seen his photos and I don't really know him, I'll usually block him or anything block that person (Olivia SF, 2016).

Olivia's account that "I had a request, [...] didn't know 'em', but I accepted it and I requested him and after I requested him he saw my photos then I saw his photos", suggests she used the behavioural practices of checking photographs to assess if the boy was acceptable.

Olivia explained her behavioural practices of checking photos as a form of surveillance designed to establish any known connection between herself and the unknown young man. She later explained that she "usually" applied an explicit set of personal rules if, "I don't know him but if I've seen his photos and I don't really know him, I'll usually block him". Sophia indicated that in this experience of intimate connection she did not follow her own rules of assessing the request from someone she did not know before accepting him. Olivia's narrative that she deviated from her personal rules of checking potential connections suggests that she grew to the side of her own self-made boundaries (Stockton 2009). Instead of following the process that she set for herself to "block him or anything block that person", Olivia's comment that she "usually" assessed potential connections before she accepted them indicates she did not follow her own self-managed process of intimate delay.

Olivia's comment of, "I felt, wait, am I doing the right thing?", suggests that in the moment of her own sideways movement she was unsure why she did not follow her usual process and personal rules associated with making connections online. The self-questioning process Olivia underwent during her sideways connective behaviour, is representative of the practice of "self-work" (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 227), that young people participating in Byron and Albury's (2018) study of digital hook up apps, associated with establishing rules and personal behaviours within digital intimate spaces. In digital hook up apps, Byron and Albury (2018)

identified that many young people tend to develop their own rules in order to “safely negotiate these spaces” (p. 222). It appears Olivia’s self-made rules were also designed to ensure safe negotiations on Instagram. However, during the occasion she described in her film, her desire for connection and sideways growth overruled adherence to her rules on this occasion. Although Olivia’s comments suggest she usually tried to manage and potentially delay her intimate connections with people she did not know, her narrative offers an example of how her connective behaviours queer notions of childhood innocence. Her comments offered multiple examples of the way one young person grew sideways through social and personal forms of delay by connecting, assessing and exploring intimacy within the digital intimate public she formed on Instagram.

Olivia’s behavioural practice of assessing potential connections offers an example of how one young person under 15 explored her subjectivity and established her own rules for navigating intimacy online. Olivia’s process resonates with Pallotta-Chiarolli’s (2013) understanding that “scripting of possible scenarios” (p. 197) offers adults, and in this example one young woman, opportunities to consider what might occur and how to manage situations when they arise. Olivia’s practice of checking photographs also resonates with the notion of *lurking* or looking at images or people online (Byron & Albury, 2018). In relation to digital environments, lurking practices relate to surveillance undertaken through observing photos and online activities in “public forms of social media” (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 215).

Across the limited studies that mention it, the act of lurking, and the lurking behaviours of adults have negative connotations (Byron & Albury, 2018; Light, 2014; Light & Cassidy, 2014). However, for Olivia to view photos of others, to “lurk” (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 215) and assess a potential intimate connection was a necessary and agentic behaviour that had a positive connotation. Olivia’s narrative suggested that she used the practice of lurking to direct her sideways movement and to explore intimacy with people unknown to her by controlling the level

of engagement during her intimate connections (Stockton, 2009). In this analysis of Olivia's behaviour, I queer the notion of lurking to offer an interpretation of its use within a new context. This queered reframing of the practice of lurking, illustrates its potential affordances for young people exploring intimacy online. Through Olivia's narrative of her connective behaviours on Instagram, the normative framing of lurking as a suspect or negative action was challenged.

The motivations informing connective behaviours appear to effect participants' experience of intimacy. Olivia's data indicate she preferred to engage in connective behaviours driven by personal rules. Olivia's practice is an example of the self-made "rules" that Byron and Albury (2018, p. 222) argued scholars need to pay attention to when considering the intimate lives and digital practices of young people. Through her self-made rules, Olivia identified the motivation for her connective behaviour, illustrated the process she "usually" undertook to navigate potential risks, and identified the potential affordances of engaging in digital intimacy. Through her account of the practices she usually employed to make intimate connections, Olivia appears to grow to the side of her own expected behaviour of checking and blocking digital intimate connection with people she did not know.

7.2.2 Following as connecting. The practice of liking, following or friending people is a behaviour of connection that Jackson discussed across two short films. In the following instance from a film he made with Aiden, Jackson comments on the practice of connecting with friends of friends.

Like, there are some friends that like are friends of friends. So, like if you were friends of a friend that was friends with me, sometimes like if you just wanted to, you'd probably friend me, randomly and I wouldn't know you, and for some reason, we'd be friends. It doesn't really mean you're friends, just I guess, you just follow those people for no reason at all. It's hard to explain really well I think it's pretty much fine (Jackson & Aiden SF 2016).

Jackson discussed the practice of connecting with friends of friends as a connective behaviour he engaged in even though he did not know the people he accepted as “friends”. Comments such as “sometime like if you just want to” illustrate that connecting with “people for no reason” is a connective behaviour he engaged in without really understanding why. His comments offered little insight into any personal rules that might have guided his intimate explorations. However, his comment of “you’d probably friend me, randomly and I wouldn’t know you, and for some reason, we’d be friends”, provides insight into his conflicted and ambivalent relationship to his own connective behaviours. This conflict is evident in the visual image he inserted into his film that depicts the “friends of friends” as mainly faceless individuals.

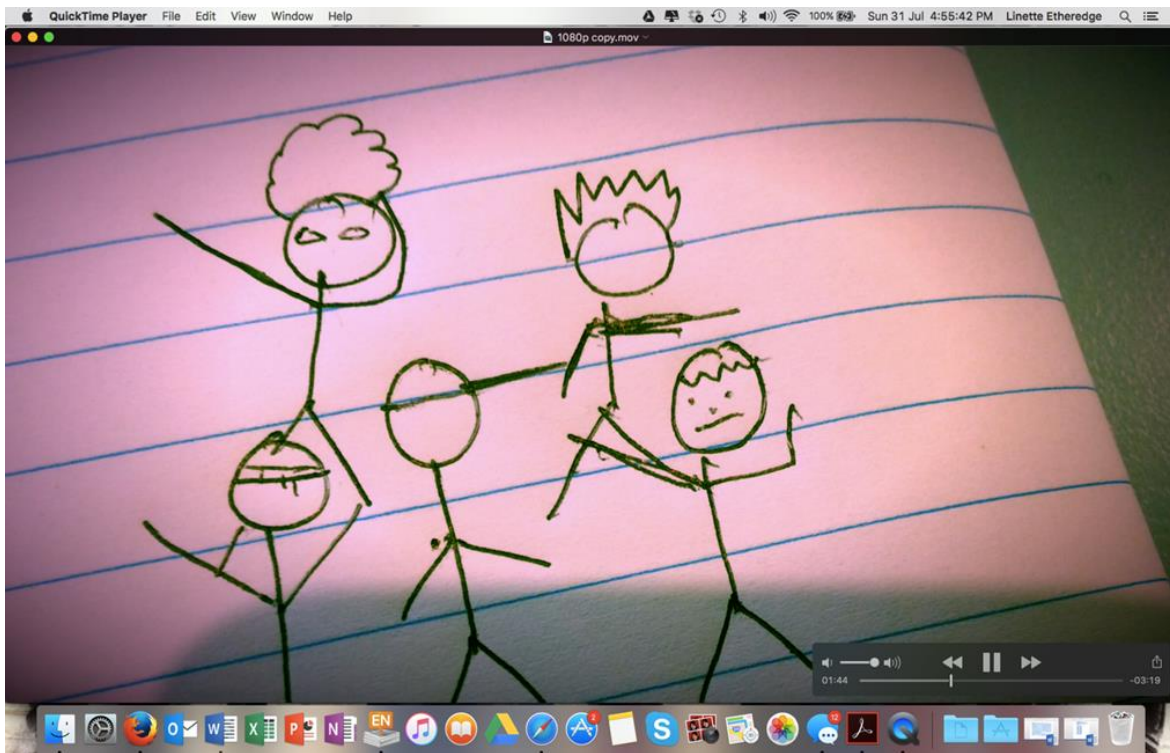


Figure 14. Liking friends of a friend on Facebook. (Jackson & Aiden’s SF, 2016)

Jackson’s narrative and the drawing he included of this experience, represented in Figure 14, offers an additional layer of understanding about his practices of intimate connecting. The practice of connecting through following or liking friends of friends appears to be a form of connection where Jackson adhered to social conventions of accepting friend requests rather than

assessing each request against any personal rules that he might have developed to manage and navigate his intimate connections online.

Jackson's comment "just I guess you just follow those people for no reason at all. It's hard to explain really well I think it's pretty much fine", suggests he gained some understanding of how intimate connections worked through sideways movements of discomfort and confusion. His confusion appears to produce a new understanding that "for some reason, we'd be friends." Although he understood that through these connections he would become friends with people he did not know, at the same time, he also understood that this form of digital friendship "doesn't really mean you're friends". Jackson's sideways movement toward a new understanding of intimacy appears to have emerged through the work of accepting the requests of friends of friends.

The work Jackson engaged in to accept and then reflect upon his intimate connective practices demonstrates the social and emotional "labour" (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 16) that Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018) argued forms experiences of digital intimacy. In this instance, Jackson's review of his process of connecting with friends of friends demonstrates the labour he expanded to maintain the kinds of "shared relations" (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 16) that constitute digital intimacy. Through the work of accepting or liking "friends of friends" requests for connection Jackson generated forms of social and emotional "value" (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018, p. 16) for himself. The kind of value he generated is not discussed by Jackson but could be represented in the number of likes on his profile or the establishment of what Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018) described as "social recognition" (p. 16) within a particular SMP. Through engagement in the everyday practice of liking friends of friends, Jackson generated valuable forms of the social and cultural capital he needed for acceptance in his social world (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018).

Jackson's experience of working to gain social recognition and social value through accepting requests from friends of friends, offers an image of a young man that challenges the

normative notion of young men possessing a form of “masculinity naturalized as sexist and predatory” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 420). Interpreted through the notion of the queer child growing sideways, an understanding of Jackson’s behaviours of connection to generate social and individual value offers an insight into the possible “economy” (Stockton, 2009, p. 5) that likes, social value and digital friends holds for Jackson. Stockton (2009) argued that for each queer child there is an economy of money or candy or some other “coin of the realm” (p. 5). For Jackson, his sideways growth appears facilitated through the “libidinal pleasures of consumption” (Stockton, 2009, p. 5) and the value he attributes to having a collection of digital friends, even those friends he knew were not really his friends. Jackson’s narrative provides an understanding of the motivational energy that drove his behavioural practices. They also illustrate the problematic or personally challenging daily practice of navigating and acquiring social and cultural value through intimate engagements with “friends of friends” online.

Jackson’s experience of making intimate connections by liking or accepting friends of friends suggest that making connections and adhering to social conventions generated unsatisfactory or confusing intimate experiences for him. For Jackson, adherence to social conventions appeared to produce an experience of intimacy narrated as challenging or problematic. Jackson’s recollection resonates with the experiences of young women negotiating intimacy across a range of digital intimate practices (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019; Ringrose et al., 2013). However as Dobson, Robards, et al. (2018) noted, the social aspects of intimate exchanges matter to all young people, including young men.

Recognising the problematic nature of acquiring social or cultural value through forms of digital connecting, offers an insight into the intimate experiences of one young man. The understanding that Jackson’s behavioural practices of connecting were complex and somewhat confusing makes a small contribution to knowledge that expands understandings of the intimate and digital lives of young men (Albury, 2015; Coy & Horvath, 2019). An analysis of Jackson’s

comments, offer new understandings of the way emerging forms of digital intimacy challenge normative notions of intimacy and masculinity. These new understandings help to further ideas across a developing body of literature discussing digital forms of intimacy (Cover, 2018; Dobson, Robards, et al., 2018). Data from Jackson illustrates that experience of making intimate connections in digital environments are complex and challenging. By contrast, the data from Olivia suggest that intimate connections are not so challenging. Although data were obtained from a small number of individuals, and this study is not representative of all young people, intimate connections that formed between groups of people online appear to have generated higher levels of complexity than one on one intimate connections. In the next section, I continue the exploration of the behaviours of intimacy by considering narratives discussing practices of sharing that led to experiences of intimacy.

7.3 Sharing

Across data from short films, eight participants discussed a range of behaviours associated with sharing intimacy online. The forms of sharing discussed in this section include practices of talking, receiving unsolicited sexual images, and sharing and discussing problems. When considering how young people share online, it is helpful to define sharing within digital intimate spaces. Kennedy (2018) argued that sharing practices are either material or immaterial forms of exchange involving objects represented by digital images or texts. As discussed in Chapter 3, digital intimate publics form when individuals develop attachments through communicating about shared experiences, ideas or worldviews (Dobson et al. 2018). In this section, I explore how three different forms of sharing behaviour offered several participants the opportunity to grow sideways within digital intimate public spaces. Through sharing practices, these young people generated sideways relations and moments of intimate growth that were undertaken in the shadows of acceptable, normative or controlled upward development (Stockton, 2009).

7.3.1 Sharing and oversharing. Some of the common sharing practices discussed by participants were those associated with communicating through talking. Data in Table 4 illustrate that talking was a common sharing practice discussed by female participants. Isabella described how talking was the most frequent sharing practices she engaged in, as she formed an intimate experience on Facebook. “We were talking and talking to each other on Facebook. I don’t even know him and um and then he started calling me names and stuff and then I said no to him” (Isabella SF, 2016). Sophia’s narrative also suggested that talking was a form of sharing that generated an experience of intimacy for her on Facebook. “We just started talking every night and day 24/7... We kind of fell, we kind of fell for each other on Facebook” (Sophia SF, 2016).

Isabella described the way intimacy formed through sharing and communicating positively by ‘talking and talking to each other on Facebook’. However, she went on to describe how this sharing experience turned into an unpleasant experience of intimacy when the same “guy” she admits ‘I don’t even know’, began sharing by communicating in an abusive way. Isabella recalled this abusive sharing by saying he “started calling me names and stuff and then I said no to him.” From the description of this sharing experience, Isabella appears to have enacted a personal rule to say “no” to a form of intimate sharing that was inappropriate, undesired and abusive. Similarly, through sharing practices and communicating on Facebook, Sophia described an intense, intimate experience where she and a “guy” were “talking every night and day 24/7.”

For Sophia the behavioural practice of sharing through talking led to a positive experience of intimacy. Sophia reported that after extensive sharing, “we kind of fell, we kind of fell for each other on Facebook.” For Isabella and Sophia, their experiences of intimacy developed through engagement in the behavioural practices of sharing themselves through talking online. Although talking was the most common label given to sharing through verbal communication, the three male participants referred to their communicative sharing practices in other ways.

Data in Table 4 illustrates that Lucas discussed forms of sharing through talking and messaging, while Aiden's account of receiving a nude image offers an insight into how he experienced a form of material sharing through an unsolicited sexual image exchange. In the short film he made with Jackson, Aiden discussed what happened when he was sharing with a girl he was messaging in an unnamed messaging site. His narrative offers an opportunity to explore the notions of sharing and oversharing as a form of sideways growth (Kennedy, 2018; Stockton, 2009).

I was messaging this girl. And, I got a nude from her, and I didn't really know how to react to it, but obviously I was a boy, so I was intrigued, and then she was talking to me some more and then she asked for one from me, but I refused to give her one. And that's, that's one of the cases of sexual relationships (Jackson & Aiden SF, 2016).

Aiden described his sharing practice as one where he was "messaging this girl" and described her behaviour in terms of her "talking". As Aiden's narrative progressed, his language changed after he received a sexual image from the girl. Aiden switched between describing their sharing practices as talking and messaging as the intensity of the experience increased. This shift in language is important as it identifies that the behavioural practice of sharing communication through "talking" or "messaging" has a material aspect. Aiden's shift in language suggests that he was aware that communicating with words and "talking" was very different from messaging and sharing nudes.

Aiden's experience of receiving an unsolicited nude image offers a unique example of the way that one young man felt about the undesired sharing behaviours of another person. Aiden's comment of, "I got a nude from her and I didn't really know how to react to it", illustrates how an act of intimate and material sharing designed to interest and attract him was experienced as unwanted. Aiden's comment that he refused to "give" the girl a nude after "she asked for one from me" demonstrates his personal rules around sending sexualised images (Byron & Albury, 2018). Aiden's reaction to the girl's desire to extend their intimate connection in a sexualised way

also illustrates that even within digital intimate publics, where marginalised peoples can explore new and different forms of intimacy, notions of appropriate or acceptable intimate sharing behaviours exist between individuals (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018).

Aiden's narrative indicates that normative notions of the rules of intimate engagement appear to be subjective and directly linked to an individual's personal rules or ethics. Aiden's account of the girl's sexualised sharing behaviour highlights that he experienced a form of sharing that was unexpected and unwanted. Aiden did not discuss the girl's motivation for sending the nude but he did explain "then she asked for one from me, but I refused to give her one" (Jackson & Aiden SF, 2016). Aiden's reaction to the nude image, and his subsequent refusal to send a nude image in return suggests that certain forms of sharing were acceptable to him, while sharing of sexual images through messaging was not. From Aiden's perspective of this experience, the girl's sharing behaviour of sending an unsolicited nude image, represented an example of intimate oversharing. Kennedy (2018) argued that "affective sharing practices" (p. 266) are undertaken with knowledge of the "tacit rules" (p. 266) that frame social relations. However, in this example, Aiden's negative response to the girl's request for a nude suggests he was not following the same rules as the girl. The sharing practices of these two young people under 15 years of age indicated that the rules of sharing are not always tacit nor is intimate image exchange a sharing practice acceptable, or desirable to, all young men.

Aiden's negative response to the receipt of the nude image, resonates with the comments of a female participant in Byron & Albury's 2018 study, who highlighted the importance of timing when sending nude images without asking. Even in the context of young adults exploring intimacy on hook up apps, the practice of sending nude images too soon, was considered an act of over sharing. With this understanding in mind, it is possible to imagine that Aiden responded to the unexpected nude as an act of oversharing. The sending of a nude, perceived as an act of over sharing, differed from forms of over sharing discussed by adults who classify oversharing as

associated with “unnecessary or undesired disclosure of details” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 266). For Aiden, the girl’s act of oversharing related to a form of sexual sharing that Aiden was not prepared for and did not want.

The boundaries between sharing and oversharing appear to be individual, subjective and driven by the motivations of the person instigating the sharing, and the perceptions of the recipient. An understanding that notions of sharing and oversharing are highly subjective for these two young people aged 11-14, challenges the concept of norming which Kennedy (2018) argued establishes clear rules and therefore, makes the performance of sharing “recognisable” (p. 266). It appears possible that the assumed “tacit” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 266) nature of sharing rules or the assumed transference of knowledge about the “social norms as understood in the broader context of everyday life” (Kennedy, 2018, p. 266) had not been learned by these two young people. Although she acknowledged that norms “shift over time” Kennedy (2018, p. 266), did not discuss the individualised or subjective nature of sharing norms. In addition, there has been little discussion exploring the ways young people under the age of 15 are learning to master social norms within digital environments.

Aiden’s narrative challenges normative expectations relating to the digital intimate behaviours of young men. In particular, Aiden’s narrative challenges the normative notion of young men as instigators of heterosexual sexting practises, and young women as victims “at moral risk of exploitation” (Ringrose et al., 2013, p. 307). Aiden’s experience queers the usual way young men are framed as irresponsible or worse still, as sexual predators when engaging in digital intimate exchanges (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Fields, 2012; Waling & Pym, 2019). His experience also challenges the notion of “hard masculinity” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 422) that characterises young men as individuals who rate, tag and collect digital images of young women’s bodies (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015b; Ringrose et al., 2013). Through his narrative, Aiden offers an insight into female to male sexual image exchange rarely reported or discussed across

the literature. Aiden's experience is in contrast with the multiple conversations about the receipt of "dick picks" (Morten Birk Hansen, 2019; Waling & Pym, 2019) and other forms of unsolicited sexual image exchange sent to young women (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015b; Ringrose et al., 2013).

Aiden's experience also suggests that digital intimacy can disrupt normative and gendered notions of who instigates intimate or sexual contact online (Naezer & Ringrose 2019). Aiden's position as the recipient of the "nude", and his uncertainty about how to deal with it, marks him as "other", different or queer from the mainstream model of normative heterosexual masculinity discussed across much of the literature (Albury, 2015; Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Ringrose et al., 2013; Waling & Pym, 2019). However, his admission that "obviously I was a boy, so I was intrigued" indicated how powerfully the heteronormative expectation of being boy framed his experience of receiving an unsolicited nude. His decision not to return a nude indicates his moment of sideways growth (Stockton, 2009) as he moved to the side of expected young, male heterosexual behaviour.

The analysis and discussion of Aiden's narrative challenges normative notions of the sexual image sharing behaviours of young people. His narrative also demonstrates that digital intimate publics offered him and the girl in his narrative everyday opportunities to learn about themselves through their engagement in intimate experiences. Most importantly, Aiden's experience suggests that sharing practices, undertaken in digital intimate publics, can offer young people experimental learning spaces where they can grow sideways as they explore unexpected or unwanted forms of intimacy.

7.3.2 Sharing problems. In narratives discussed across two different short films, Jackson talked about his experience of sharing problems within an online group chat. The following instance demonstrates one of those discussions, and offers an example of the way practices of group sharing complicated experiences of both sharing and intimacy for Jackson.

I was um part of this group and there was a girlfriend and boyfriends. [...] They were arguing because, arguing because of like, they thought they were cheating on each other and everything like that. Oh God! And for some reason they depended on me. So then, they just made a group and then like just made people join so then they could help them with this for random reasons. [...] We started dealing with them and that, and then they said they should break up even though none of them were cheating on each other they were just guessing because you never trust friends on Facebook or anything like that sometimes they will tell fibs just like to break you up randomly. [...] told them it wasn't true of course it wasn't true. [...] And as a result of my saying that, and then checking just in case, [...] it got really out of control. They didn't listen to me. I thought I'd resolved it. [...] I got like into a situation where it was like, Oh God! An' then one of them didn't trust me because of saying that. And then it was hard to stop it because no one will trust me. An' then one of my other friends [...] she actually stopped the argument like really easily. Because she got, made sure. She looked through all of it. Made sure there was nothing there and she said the truth (Jackson & Aiden SF 2016).

Jackson's opening comments indicate he "was part of this group" sharing ideas about the problems of a couple who were "arguing because of like, they thought they were cheating on each other". The group chat consisted of many people brought together after the couple "just made people join so then they could help them for random reasons". Jackson's comments indicate that he did not know the other members of the group but that he felt confident to participate and share his ideas about the couple's situation. When Jackson said, "we started dealing with them and that, and then they said they should break up even though none of them were cheating", Jackson revealed that the group was offering advice and sharing ideas about how the couple should resolve their problems. As his narrative continued, Jackson revealed how his experience of sharing his ideas about the couple's situation became problematic after he said the couple were not cheating on each other, "I told them it wasn't true of course it wasn't true". Jackson revealed that the situation then "got really out of control. They didn't listen to me. I thought I'd resolved it". The anxiety still attached to Jackson's intimate experience was evident in the tone of his voice and his exasperation as he described the situation on film.

Jackson's experience of sharing problems and sharing solutions became problematic. This was evident when he revealed "then I got like into a situation where it was like, Oh God! An' then one of them didn't trust me because of saying that." Through the process of sharing his ideas about the couple and their problems with the group, Jackson revealed that he became the focus of the groups' negative comments. In this moment, Jackson became a child queer to his peers because he was "different, odd, out-of-sync" (Stockton, 2009, p. 6) and made separate from the others in the group. The distress that Jackson experienced as an outsider in the group was evident in his comment, "an' then one of them didn't trust me because of saying that. And then it was hard to stop it because no one will trust me". Through the uncomfortable experience of not being trusted within the group, Jackson experienced a difficult form of group intimacy. However, he resolved this difficult situation by moving sideways when he asked another friend outside the group chat to help him.

In this movement away from the group chat, Jackson's motives for his sideways growth appear related to self-preservation and the protection of the social capital or social value that was important to him (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018). Jackson called on his friend to intervene and thus shared his problem through a sideways relation. He reported that his friend, "actually stopped the argument like really easily. Because she got, made sure. She looked through all of it. Made sure there was nothing there and she said the truth". Jackson's experience illustrates Byron and Albury's (2018) point that when groups form in digital environments, it is often new members who find it most difficult to understand the group norms and unspoken rules. Therefore, it is possible that for many young people like Jackson, new social rules or group conventions are only understood through "practice-based knowledge" (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 225) acquisition that occurs as they explore and experiment with intimacy online. In this example, Jackson's knowledge acquisition was tainted by his feelings of anxiety, and his positioning as being strange or queer when compared to the other members of the group.

Jackson's narrative is one example of how the sharing practices of a group of young people aged 12-14 appear to be different from those of adults. Kennedy (2018) argued that sharing "relationship difficulties" (p. 266) was a topic considered too much for adults who classified it as an example of oversharing. By contrast, amongst the group of young people in Jackson's story, sharing and discussing intimate details about the difficulties of relationships was an acceptable and highly engaging form of sharing. This difference marks the young people in this narrative as queer or different from the adults who might consider the same experience of intimate sharing as one defined by notions of oversharing (Kennedy, 2018). However, Jackson's narrative demonstrates that within the group chat, there was pressure to adhere to what Byron and Albury (2018) called "well-defined expectations of non-normative in app behaviour" (p. 219). Jackson's experience of breaking the unspoken rules of his in-app behaviour resulted in fellow members of the group being angry with him and not trusting him because he "violated" (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 219) the group's expectations of what thoughts or opinions about the couple could be shared.

It is widely accepted that people know or quickly learn the rules associated with sharing (Kennedy, 2018) and the rules of intimacy (Berlant, 1998). However, data from Aiden and Jackson's short film highlighted that for young people aged 11-14 many of the *tacit* rules and socially understood processes associated with sharing and intimacy were unknown to these young people. Data indicate that for the young people in this study, the rules of sharing and intimacy were not always tacit or known, because they had not been learned. To complicate matters further, any social rules that exist appear to be in a state of constant re-negotiation for young people who are exploring intimacy both online and through FTF encounters.

The sharing practices explored in this section, resonate with similar practices discussed in Hart's (2015) study of how young people aged 18-25, engaged in Tumblr "to practise intimacy and sociality in diverse ways" (p. 193). Although data from the participants in this study

concurred with Hart's (2015) findings, I expand on the idea that young people engaged in online intimate behaviours to practice intimacy. Through the analysis of data in this study, I argue that it is specifically through sharing behaviours that intimacy occurs, and thus, the process of practising intimacy is made possible. Instead of engaging online to practise intimacy, data generated by the participants in this study indicates that engagement in both material and immaterial forms of sharing formed the experience of intimacy. The behavioural practices of sharing, appear to have directed the process of engagement and intimate growth that enabled these young people to experience emotions, and practice sharing behaviours that generated intimate experiences. Therefore, the notion of practice suggests that the young people in this study were developing a sense of intimacy through engagement in sharing processes that evolved and changed as they continued to share ideas, images, problems and feelings online.

Through sharing practices, the participants also acquired knowledge of social conventions associated with intimate sharing as they began to develop their personal rules around sharing intimacy online. The analysis of data from Isabella, Sophia and Aiden demonstrated when participants developed and shared intimacy guided by their personal rules rather than adhering to social conventions, the experience of intimacy and the social and emotional labour required to navigate the exploration of intimacy was less intense. Conversely, Jackson's narrative illustrates that adherence to social conventions required a great deal of social and emotional labour to navigate the intimate experience. Through a range of sharing practices, the young people who participated in this study grew sideways, backwards and otherwise as they negotiated intimate growth through the delay imposed upon them by a normative framing of childhood innocence (Stockton, 2009). Furthermore, the sharing behaviours of talking, discussing problems and nude image exchange, highlighted the multiple ways that sideways movements occur in the everyday intimate and digital practices of these young people. The sharing practices discussed in this

section illustrate how these young people used SMP to explore a broad range of intimate experiences including sexualised and non-sexualised forms of intimacy.

7.4 Disconnecting

The behaviours of connecting and sharing generated the need for further behaviours associated with movement and disconnection from intimate experiences. Light and Cassidy (2014) argued that disconnective practices are essential parts of connection both within SNS and within the “physical world”(p. 1173). In continuing to challenge the normative notions associated with young people’s intimate and digital experiences, I explore the idea of disconnection not only as a behaviour of separation, but also as a connective behavioural practice that facilitated sideways movements that led to non-normative growth. Through an analysis of data describing practices of disconnection documented in Table 4, I explore how several participants used a range of disconnective practices to explore intimacy. These practices of disconnection included blocking and deleting contacts, movement across different digital platforms or to FTF contact, and disconnecting by saying no or voicing non-consent. Throughout these discussions, I engage with Light and Cassidy’s (2014) idea that “disconnection is a necessity in SNS and social media environments” (p. 1171), and explore the many ways that several young people in this study grew sideways through enacting disconnective practices during their intimate explorations in digital environments (Stockton, 2009). To begin, I consider the disconnecting practices of blocking, deleting and movement.

7.4.1 Blocking, deleting and moving. Practices of blocking, deleting and movement were behaviours of disconnection discussed multiple times across data from Olivia, Jackson, Lucas, Ava and Sophia. Although data from Olivia’s narrative was explored in the discussion of connecting (Section 7.2.1), she was the only participant who discussed the disconnective practice of blocking in this study. For this reason, I re analyse a small section of her narrative where she explained when and why she engaged in practices of disconnecting by blocking people on

Instagram. “So, this is what I usually do if um, I don’t know him, but, if I’ve seen his photos and I don’t really know him I’ll usually block him or anything, block that person” (Olivia SF, 2016). While Olivia discussed disconnecting from individuals, Jackson’s behaviour related to disconnecting from an application. Although I have discussed this data instance in the analysis of Kik and the exploration of locations of intimacy in Section 6.4.2, I once again use the same data to explore Jackson’s disconnective practice of deleting an application. “I was on a chat on Kik. I deleted it a while back, after I realised it was a pretty bad app. Like for paedophile reasons” (Jackson & Aiden SF, 2016).

In another example, Lucas explained that he moved from one SMP to another to ensure that he could enact disconnective practices and delete messages if he wanted to. This is evident when he said, “and they started talking over Facebook. And then they moved over to KIK, cause you can delete the messages” (Lucas SF, 2016). Ava also described experiences of disconnecting after her intimate connection moved from a digital location into FTF contact.

I have Facebook and I met this boy ...And he told me where he lived, and I told him where I lived [...], and then we had a fight, and then we got along again, and then we had a fight again, and we got along, and then we dated. And then um, I met this other boy can’t remember his name I dated him which was actually kind of gross. But anyway, I dated him, but then I broke up with him and went out with the other guy again and then we came best friends (Ava SF, 2016).

While Ava discussed disconnecting through movement and breaking up with her boyfriend, Sophia explained that after her relationship moved from a digital location to a FTF situation she disconnected from a “guy” when they broke up.

It was just a you know a Facebook relationship I guess. [...] Then it came to the day when he asked me out. He was a bit shy cause it was me [...] It was a good relationship for about four weeks a month. And um like it was git [legitimate]. I guess like, we had a lot in common we well, then we kind of fell apart. I had stuff going on at home and I guess,

well from his words he said, ‘he kind of lost feelings’ during the four weeks and then we broke up and I thought it would be over cause it was him (Sophia SF, 2016).

Olivia’s discussion of the behavioural practices of blocking unknown individuals, demonstrated that behaviours of connection and disconnection entwine as young people explored their intimate lives online. Olivia explained that if she did not know a person, she would usually “block him”. However, she indicated that she would engage in behavioural practices associated with checking and assessing the photographs of the potential new contact before enacting a permanent disconnection. After she had “seen his photos” she went on to say that she would “block that person” if the person was unknown to her. For Olivia, engaging in the behavioural practice of blocking someone from her Instagram account usually occurred before establishing an intimate connection. By contrast, the behavioural practices of disconnection discussed by Jackson and Lucas occurred after an already established intimate connection moved or developed in a direction that was not desirable to them.

Jackson and Lucas enacted disconnective practices to remove themselves from awkward or difficult forms of intimate connection. Jackson explained that he chose to delete an application (app) and discontinue an exploration of intimacy on Kik, saying “I was on a chat on Kik I deleted it a while back after I realised it was a pretty bad app. Like for paedophile reasons”. In this situation, Jackson used the behavioural practice of physically disconnecting from an app to remove himself from people he did not know who were making unwanted intimate contact with him. Similarly, Lucas explained why he moved from discussing his intimate relationship on Facebook to Kik by saying “and then they moved over to Kik, cause you can delete the messages”. Lucas’ comment highlights that he engaged in a behavioural practice of disconnection for a practical reason in order to control the digital trace of his intimate conversations. Lucas’ need to delete content, offers an example of how personal rules can determine individual behavioural practices of disconnection online.

For Ava and Sophia, movement across digital sites or disconnection from a digital location to explore intimacy through a FTF connection generated complexity in their intimate experiences. In her narrative, Sophia did not describe the disconnection in terms of behaviours; she explained what happened when their intimate connection moved from talking online to a FTF relationship. Sophia's narrative is compelling, because her explanation of why her intimate connection was lost offers an insight into the multiple layers of intimate connection that affected her unsatisfactory experience of intimacy and eventual disconnection. Her comments suggest that, "it was a good relationship for about four weeks a month". However, Sophia then explained, "well then we kind of fell apart. I had stuff going on at home and I guess, well from his words he said, 'he kind of lost feelings'". Although she explained she and the guy had a "lot in common", their FTF relationship did not survive while she had "stuff going on at home". Sophia's experience of the intimate connection changed when she enacted a disconnection and moved from a digital form of intimacy to FTF contact. Her intimate experience resonates with Ava's intimate experience because her connection did not continue after it moved from a digital location to a FTF location either.

Disconnection is central to connection and thus the participants' experiences of intimacy. Light and Cassidy (2014) argued that it is essential to "consider the role of disconnection as an active part of our engagements with SNSs" (p. 1171) because it is through disconnections that other connections emerge. Participants' disconnective practices of blocking individuals, removing themselves from a digital site or moving from digital intimacy to FTF contact, all resonate with the range of disconnective practices that Light and Cassidy (2014) argued make it possible for individuals to "live with connectivity" (p. 1173) in SNS. Perhaps Sophia and Ava disconnected from physical forms of intimacy and used digital intimate publics to "fashion a crucial delay in expectations being placed upon them [selves] (and to craft sidelong movements of their own) on the threshold of adulthood" (Stockton, 2009, p. 5). As I think about the way

these young people were fashioning their own sidelong movements through disconnecting, I am reminded that Stockton (2009) framed young people's sideways relations and interactions with animals, particularly the family pet, as disconnective behaviours designed to control their own delay and advancement toward adult intimacy. Stockton (2009) argued that engagement with "paedophiles and animals" (p. 5) often offer young people ways to explore sideways relations and practice intimacy inside delay. In a similar way, digital intimate publics offered the young people in these narratives opportunities to engage in connections and disconnections to explore their intimate lives and grow inside delay. This line of thinking troubles and queers normative understandings of disconnection, and suggests that in order to grow and develop intimacy, disconnective behaviours are essential.

The behaviours of disconnection discussed by these five participants resonate with disconnective practices discussed across the literature. For example, Lucas and Jackson's need to control their digital trace resonated with the comments made by older users of hook up apps that Byron and Albury (2018) identified used the disconnective strategy of deleting, to ensure personal safety and control their online content. Light (2014) recognised that "connection and disconnection are seen to be in play together. In particular, disconnective practice, arguably, acts as a device that allows forms of connection to exist both in and beyond any given SNS" (p. 4). Expanding on the concept of "geographies of disconnection", Light and Cassidy (2014, p. 1173) discussed the idea of considering all acts of disconnection in relation to complementary concepts such as joining, moving, suspending or disengaging forms of participation enacted across a range of digital sites and physical locations. Through his disconnective practices of moving from Facebook to Kik to delete messages, Lucas demonstrated the social and emotional labour required to navigate and manage intimacy within digital intimate public spaces.

Olivia's narrative about her usual practice of blocking unknown requests is an example of one-dimensional disconnective power (Light & Cassidy, 2014). In Olivia's discussion, her ability

to block unknown requests enabled her to make connections with people that she wanted to connect with but whom she was not sure she knew. The act of blocking is an example of using obvious and explicit power to disconnect from someone on a SNS. However, as Byron and Albury (2018) pointed out, blocking practices do not always resolve the issue of undesired intimate contact online sometimes framed in terms of “harassment” (p. 220) and in extreme cases as “online abuse” (Salter, 2018, p. 30). Jackson’s narrative also suggests that he engaged in disconnective practices exercising “obvious and explicit power” (Light & Cassidy, 2014, p. 1173) to disconnect from a situation that was not acceptable to him. His behaviour resonates with the behaviour of older same sex attracted young people who reported engaging in similar practices of deleting apps and blocking senders (Byron & Albury, 2018). By enacting his disconnective powers, Jackson established some new understanding of the kinds of locations and people he wanted to explore intimacy with online. His description of his disconnective behaviours represented a new set of behavioural practices for Jackson, who subsequently began to explore his intimate life through the enactment of his personal rules rather than by following social conventions.

Lucas’ practice of disconnection by movement across digital platforms for functional reasons offers an example of the enactment of “third dimensional power” (Light & Cassidy, 2014, p. 1173). Lucas’ conscious move from Facebook to Kik, because on Kik “you can delete the messages”, is an example of a disconnective practice designed to ensure he avoided any “public airing of conflict” (Light & Cassidy, 2014, p. 1173) that might have occurred in his relationship with the girl. Through his act of moving digital locations to ensure he could delete messages, Lucas appeared to be directing his intimate experience through the enactment of his personal rules.

Olivia, Jackson, Lucas, Ava and Sophia’s disconnective practices were physical acts of disconnection from social platforms or from individuals. The discussion of the individual rules

that these participants used to navigate their intimate experiences online resonates with the work of Byron and Albury (2018) who explored the motivations of adults using disconnective practices to disengage from undesired contact in dating and hook up apps. In their study, individual rules and behaviours of disconnection were determined by participants individual “ethical practices” and their developing sense of the “moral codes” (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 225) forming through acts of digital intimacy. The detailed information about who, what, where, how and why these young people engaged in disconnective practices suggests their motivation for engaging in disconnective practices on Instagram, Facebook and Kik were similar to the motivations of the adults who discussed their use of disconnective practices of blocking while exploring intimacy on dating and hook up apps (Byron & Albury, 2018). However, the example of the disconnective practices of young people under the age of 15 contributes several new insights into the ways that a small group of young people aged 11-14 negotiated moments of risk, safety and experiences of intimacy within digital locations. Therefore, data analysed in this study, offers new knowledge about how disconnective behaviours form part of the rich tapestry that is the lived experiences of young people aged 11-14 exploring intimacy within digital and FTF environments.

7.4.2 Saying no and voicing non-consent. Participants undertook behavioural practices of disconnection through verbal forms of declaring non-consent. Voicing non-consent by saying “no” or refusing to reciprocate a form of sharing were behavioural practices discussed as common forms of disconnection. Across data generated by both male and female participants, saying “no” resulted in disconnections from intimacy in both digital locations and in FTF intimate exchanges.

An example of several forms of disconnecting as described by Riley, demonstrates how both moving from the digital intimate public of Facebook into a FTF location and saying “no” were forms of one dimensional disconnective power that she discussed in her narrative (Light & Cassidy, 2014).

And then my brother invited him to stay at my house. So [pause] it was kind ‘a’ awkward [pause] But um [pause] my brother tried to [pause] do something really bad he tried to make us stay [pause] and I said no [pause] and still today he’s my best friend (Riley SF, 2016).

Saying “no” was also a phrase that Isabella discussed twice in her short film about a boy she met on Facebook. I have already considered a portion of Isabella’s narrative in the discussion of Facebook in Section 6.3.2, but in the following instance, I analyse the second part of her story to explore how and why she engaged in practices of disconnection on Facebook.

I don’t even know him. Um and then he started calling me names and stuff and then, I said no to him. And then things happened between me and him. And um and yeah, um there’s this other guy on Facebook. He was one of my friend’s best friends and he doesn’t know me, he so he sort of likes me but I don’t like him back. So I kind of like had a break from him cause we were talking and talking to each other on Facebook. And um um he and his best friend which is my friend asked me out but I said no cause it’s kind of easy for a girl to say no. And um yeah so that was my story I didn’t know what was going on so I stayed off my friend for a while and yeah that’s it thanks for watching (Isabella SF, 2016).

In the first instance, Riley’s disconnective practices were evident when she explained that she and the boy left Facebook to meet in person after her “brother invited him to stay at my house”. This disconnection of movement facilitated a FTF meeting where she later demonstrated a second form of disconnection by saying “no” to the suggestion that the “best friend” stay at her house. Although Riley states that the FTF meeting at her house was “kind ‘a’ awkward”, it did not stop her from verbalising her non-consent to the proposed activity that she did not want to do. In this example of a disconnective practice, Riley appeared to resist the sideways relations that her brother proposed. She explained this awkward experience in the following way, “my brother tried to [pause] do something really bad he tried to make us stay [pause], and I said no and still today he’s my best friend”.

In this awkward experience of intimacy, it is not clear what Riley is saying ‘no’ to. In Riley’s narrative, saying “no” was a form of disconnection that facilitated a movement from the intimacy of attraction to the intimacy of “best friends” with the young man in her story. Riley’s personal rules appeared to govern the enactment of her behaviours of disconnection through verbalising non-consent. However, through enacting disconnection, Riley facilitated a new form of connection with the young man, and a new intimate relationship of friendship emerged. As Riley narrated this story on her film, she smiled extensively when she made the final statement that the boy was now her “best friend”.

Isabella provided two examples that demonstrated how she employed personal rules to manage and control the level of intimate connection or intimate abuse she would accept from a “guy” she connected with on Facebook. To begin, Isabella explained how she disconnected by saying “no” to a “guy” who was abusing her on Facebook. She explained, “I don’t even know him and um and then he started calling me names and stuff and then I said “no” to him”. In her next statement, Isabella provided an understanding of how she enacted her personal rules for saying “no”, and she also indicated that saying “no” was easy for her. This is evident when she said, “his best friend, which is my friend, asked me out, but I said no cause it’s kind of easy for a girl to say no.” Isabella and Riley’s narratives considered together, suggest that disconnecting through the behavioural practice of saying “no” is a social convention that was relatively easy for these two young women to undertake as they explored intimate connections in both digital and FTF environments. These examples of young women enacting disconnections, through articulating non-consent or saying “no”, are important as they challenge many commonly held beliefs that young women are passive victims of young men’s intimate desires or behaviours (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Fields, 2012; Salter, 2018).

Several participants in this study offered narratives of disconnection. These narratives suggest that personal rules designed to protect and contain boundaries of the self, drove their

disconnective behaviours. Participants Olivia, Aiden and Jackson discussed their disconnective behaviours as processes they used to ensure they engaged in forms of intimacy that conformed to their developing personal rules (Byron & Albury, 2018). The young people in this study, demonstrated that disconnective behaviours were used to avoid intimate experiences they did not desire. In addition, analysis of data indicated that the enactment of these disconnections helped participants to facilitate greater intimate connections within themselves. These forms of inner connection represent non-normative or sideways forms of growth that developed through self-reflection instigated by external and often sideways relations (Stockton, 2009; Gilbert, 2014). This distancing of the self might also explain why the young people in this study reported that digital intimacy generated more satisfying intimate experiences than FTF forms of physical intimacy. This line of thinking raises questions about how disconnective behaviours facilitated sideways growth for participants, and adds a layer of complexity to the discussions exploring the intimate and digital lives of young people aged 11-14 (Stockton, 2009).

7.5 Conclusion

The exploration and discussion of the behavioural practices of connecting, sharing and disconnecting, offered insight into the many ways that behavioural practices driven by personal rules and social conventions influenced the intimate experiences of participants. These discussions highlighted a number of ways participants' behavioural practices challenged, disrupted and redefined normative, heterosexual and gendered understandings of young people's intimate and digital lives. These insights contribute to knowledge by exposing the behavioural practices of a small number of young people aged 11-14. They also highlight the complexity of young people's intimate experiences, and illustrate the need to explore broader notions of intimacy beyond sexual intimacy. Data from Riley, Sophia and Ava illustrated, that the complexity of these young women's intimate experiences increased when digital intimacy moved offline to FTF encounters.

Of the experiences described through the discussion of behavioural practices of intimacy, data indicated that these young people were negotiating forms of digital and FTF intimacy that were both wanted and unwanted. This understanding indicates that many of the young people involved in this study were learning to negotiate their experiences of intimacy by disconnecting from sites or people when the experience was unwanted, unpleasant or unsafe. From understanding the locations of intimacy and the behavioural practices that generated intimacy, I turn to an exploration of the emotions that remained attached to three participants' experiences of intimacy. An analysis and discussion of data exploring emotion, offers new understandings of the way emotion and intimacy were interconnected for the young people in this study.

Chapter 8: Emotions and Intimacy

8.1 Introduction

In this final data analysis chapter, I consider data that demonstrated the many ways that digital intimate public spaces enabled three participants to explore and experience emotions and intimacy. I explore data moments from Sophia, Lucas and Jackson to consider emotions associated with confusion, frustration and anger because their narratives offered numerous and rich details of the emotions attached to their experiences of intimacy. Due to the extent, variation and complexity of the experiences discussed by these three participants, I returned to their narratives and different data instances, to demonstrate how emotion and intimacy appear interlinked in intimate experiences. The process of focusing on the details of these three participants' experiences, connects the analysis process back to one of the key qualities of a short-term ethnography (Pink & Morgan, 2013). In addition, a focus on the details of these three participants' experiences, illustrates how working with a subjunctive methodology, that does not prescribe a specific outcome or dictate a rigid set of procedures, can support researchers to queer and complicate understandings of young people and their lived experiences of intimacy (Talburt, 2010).

Through a consideration of emotions and intimacy, I explore some of the participants' sideways movements occurring in the "suspensions and shadows" (Stockton, 2009, p. 13) of normative, upward growth. According to Stockton (2009), shadows and suspensions of growth are represented by the "energy, pleasure, vitality and (e)motion in the back and forth of connections that are not reproductive" (Stockton, 2009, p. 13). To investigate examples of the energy and vitality attached to moments of sideways growth, I engage Ahmed's (2004a, 2004b) notion of emotion and affect. Through the concept of sticky emotions, Ahmed (2004a, 2010a), theorised emotions as experiences that bind things and people together. Like Stockton's (2009)

concept of sideways growth, Ahmed (2004b) argued that emotions move in multiple directions including “sideways” (p. 120), backwards, between and through subjects and objects. The emotions analysed across this final data discussion chapter, offer important insights into the emotional and intimate experiences of three young people aged 11-14.

8.2 Emotions and Digital Intimacy

Through the thematic analysis of data from films, digital intimate publics were identified as the metaphoric “vehicles” (Stockton, 2009, p. 120) that eight of the 10 participants used to explore emotion in ways not possible in FTF encounters. The emotions most often discussed by participants related to feelings of confusion, frustration, upset and anger. The frequency of these discussions indicated that many of the participants’ experiences of intimacy were associated with emotions that were challenging or unresolved. I begin this consideration of emotions and intimacy by discussing a data instance from Sophia.

8.2.1 Digital (e)motion. Data suggests digital intimate publics (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018) offered several participants sites to explore emotions in ways that were not possible in FTF encounters. Sophia’s narrative illustrates that Facebook provided a space where she and her boyfriend expressed emotion. Prior to this moment in the data instance, Sophia explained that she was talking to her boyfriend on Facebook (see Section 6.3.2).

It was really good, but it only lasted a week though cause like it was school holidays. It was two-week holiday, and we dated on the last day of school and it was good. We talked a lot. The next day we talked a lot, but then, the rest of that one week I don’t know what happened he maybe didn’t want to talk he just didn’t really seem interested in me anymore. I kind of felt like I was the only one putting a 100% into it he wasn’t and kind of blaming me cause I was. I don’t know what I was saying. I just wanted to talk, and he didn’t really want to. So I, one week and I dumped him cause he didn’t really do anything after we got together. It was one day that we talked a lot and then the rest of the week we didn’t talk at all. He didn’t want to meet up. He didn’t do anything. I dumped him and then he blamed me for it because he said he still liked me but just didn’t feel like it was

the right time to talk for him. I didn't know what that meant, but it made me pretty angry and what he's like he doesn't really show emotion. Yeah, he only does it on Facebook. And um yeah I don't know. [...] As I was saying, my ex doesn't really show emotion he doesn't really show [...]. Yeah, um he doesn't really show emotion in person only on Facebook (Sophia SF, 2016).

In this instance, Sophia described her frustration as she recalled what happened between her and her boyfriend when they “got together” after dating in person “on the last day of school”. As her narrative progressed, the frustration she felt about this experience became evident. She concluded her recollection by acknowledging that her boyfriend “doesn't really show emotion in person only on Facebook”. In a voice filled with resignation and sad acceptance of an unsatisfactory experience of intimacy, Sophia revealed her thoughts saying, “he said he still liked me but just didn't feel like it was the right time to talk for him. I didn't know what that meant, but it made me pretty angry”. Her comment highlights how the emotions of confusion, frustration and anger remained stuck to her experience of intimacy with a young man she talked about frequently across her 22 minute film (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a).

Sophia's narrative documents a range of negative or troubling emotions such as confusion and frustration that she experienced while exploring intimacy. The confusion attached to her experience was evident when she said, “the next day we talked a lot, but then, the rest of that one week, I don't know what happened, he maybe didn't want to talk he just didn't really seem interested in me anymore”. As her narrative continued, it became clear that their intimate communication was online and that her boyfriend did not want to meet in person. This is evident when she said, “it was one day that we talked a lot and then the rest of the week we didn't talk at all. He didn't want to meet up”. Sophia's narrative stated that her boyfriend expressed emotion on Facebook but that he could not or would not “show emotion in person”. The emotion of confusion mixed with the emotion of frustration was evident in Sophia's narrative when she said, “he didn't really do anything after we got together”. However, as her story progressed the tone of

her voice revealed that she moved from confusion and frustration toward expressing irritation or even anger.

Sophia described the way emotions and intimate communication was moving back and forth between these two young people. Ahmed (2004a, 2010a) theorised emotions as experiences that stick to both individuals and social worlds. She argued that the emotions that stick also generate value or a form of emotional economy transmitted through feelings that move between individuals and groups. Sophia's data illustrated that through the practice of talking online, the couple created emotional value in the back and forth of sharing their lives on Facebook. However, her data also illustrated that when the back and forth of the emotional exchange ceased, Sophia grew frustrated. The experience, that she had described in words that suggested "it was good", then moved and shifted in value to be an experience marked by negative emotions. Her admission that it "made me pretty angry" suggested that the emotions of frustration, upset and anger remained stuck to her experience of intimacy, while the emotions attached to the "good" feelings did not.

Throughout her narrative, Sophia was comfortable articulating her emotional experiences. However, her comments illustrated that her boyfriend's lack of emotion was problematic for her when she said he "doesn't really show emotion. Yeah, he only does it on Facebook." Sophia stated her boyfriend's inability to express emotion in FTF contact three times across her narrative. The repetition and continued reference to his lack of emotional expression away from Facebook, worked to highlight Sophia's desire for expression of emotion "in person". Her desire for FTF emotional contact and the subsequent unmet expectation that her boyfriend would express emotion in person as he had "on Facebook", illuminated the stickiness of the confusion and frustration attached to Sophia's recollection of this intimate experience.

Ahmed (2010a) argued emotional experiences are subjective and the value or attention attributed to these emotions often relates to previous experiences. The subjectivity of

experiencing emotion, and the way emotions affect understandings of intimacy, is more often about “what is behind the object, the conditions of its arrival” (Ahmed, 2010a p. 33) rather than what actually happened in the moment of intimate connection. In normative terms, these subjective experiences are often referred to as “bad feelings” and “good feelings” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39). The movement of “bad feelings” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39) between the couple described in this narrative, was evident when Sophia said, “he just didn’t really seem interested in me anymore. I kind of felt like I was the only one putting a 100% into it he wasn’t”, and again in her statement, “he didn’t do anything. I dumped him, and then he blamed me for it”. In this data instance, Sophia conveyed the feelings of disappointment and frustration moving between these two young people. These bad feelings or negative emotions appeared to be stuck to both Sophia’s and her boyfriend’s experience as she described the “dramas” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39) of their intimate experience that existed on Facebook but could not be realised in person.

Sophia’s account of the emotions of confusion and frustration illustrated how challenging she found accepting his inability or unwillingness to express emotion in person. Her experience could be considered through Ahmed’s (2004a, 2010a) theory that emotions both draw things together and push them apart as they move between individuals and social worlds. This understanding of emotions challenges the normative notion that emotions originate from one body or another. Instead, Sophia’s narrative illustrated the possibility that emotions of frustration, confusion and disappointment moved between Sophia and her boyfriend as they tried to work through the bad feelings that moved around them.

Sophia’s narrative illustrates the way these two young people used digital intimate public spaces as “vehicles” (Stockton, 2009, p. 120) to facilitate sideways growth through uncomfortable emotional experiences. Through a range of often unacceptable vehicles, Stockton (2009) argued that the child/young person queered by innocence, uses the delay imposed upon them to “fashion movements and sideways relations on its own behalf often in distinction from its

parents' wishes or a future predetermined by the culture of its day" (p. 120). In Sophia's narrative, digital intimate publics represent the vehicles through which she and her boyfriend fashioned the movements that led to their experience of both emotion and intimacy. When Sophia's experience of sideways growth is considered with Ahmed's (2004a, 2010a) concept of sticky emotions, it is possible to argue that her narrative illustrated the way her feelings of confusion, and frustration provided the energy and movement for her to grow through connections in the shadows of normative growth. Stockton (2009) argued that it is by moving through the energy and vitality of the shadows and suspensions of normative growth that sideways growth is made possible.

Sophia's commentary about her boyfriend's inability to express emotion "in person" resonates with comments from a 20-year-old female participant in Holford's (2019) study of heterosexual intimate relationships. In her study, a young man was "constructed as emotionally lacking and under-skilled" (Holford, 2019, p. 165) by his girlfriend who stated that he "doesn't like talking about his feelings" (p. 165). In contrast to the young man in Holford's (2019) study, Sophia's boyfriend is not described as emotionally lacking. Instead, he is described as incapable of or resistant to, talking about his feelings or showing emotions "in person". Sophia's observations and comment, that "yeah, um he doesn't really show emotion in person only on Facebook" highlights that both young people explored emotion, expressed emotion and shared emotions that generated an experience of intimacy on Facebook.

The limited research on the intimate relationships of young men argued that they lacked the capacity to be emotional (Holford, 2019). However, Sophia's narrative of how and why she broke up with her boyfriend illustrated that he was capable of being emotional but that he lacked the desire or capacity to "show emotion in person". Sophia's account of experiencing an exchange of digital emotion and non-existent FTF emotional expression, resonates with Bollmer's (2018) argument that intimacy is both desirable and at the same time unbearable. Her boyfriend's ability

to express emotion “on Facebook” and his inability to show emotion in person, was problematic for Sophia. Through the sticky attachment of “bad feelings” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39), Sophia’s intimate experience was recalled as frustrating, unsatisfactory and lacking the intensity and consistency of emotion that she wanted, expected and valued from an experience of intimacy.

8.2.2 Escaping physical (e)motion. To contrast Sophia’s desire for emotional expression in person, I consider Lucas’ experience of unwanted physical contact and emotional expression “in person”.

Yeah and so they ended up dating, but the worst thing was he didn’t know what to do! He didn’t know how to break up with her. It was the worst! So, then every day she would hug him, and he would go “help me” an’ so then it was the worst for him. And then one day over Kik, the boy messaged the girl trying to say that he wants to break up with her (Lucas SF, 2016).

In this instance from a larger narrative, Lucas identified the digital intimate publics of “Kik” and “Facebook” as places of respite or retreat from unwanted or challenging emotions experienced “in person”. Lucas’ comments illustrated that he used digital intimate public spaces to avoid physical displays of intimacy and the uncomfortable emotions generated through that experience. His narrative identified many emotions such as discomfort, “it was the worst”, or confusion, “he didn’t know what to do”, that moved between him and the girl in his narrative. The confusion he felt appeared to have made him uncomfortable at the time of the experience, and from an analysis of his behaviour captured on film, his feelings of discomfort and anger resurfaced again as he recounted his experience on film.

Lucas confided to the camera the story of his intimate experience framed through the emotions of confusion, helplessness and frustration. His frustration was evident through the thumping sound that accompanied his words as he banged his hand on the desk at the end of each sentence. Lucas explained how the digital intimate public spaces of Kik and Facebook provided alternative sites where he tried to escape the strong feeling that occurred when “she would hug

him”. Lucas explained that when the girl expressed her affection for him in a physical manner, he felt helpless and he commented that it “was the worst for him”. His commentary and his cry of “help me”, suggested that the stickiness of the emotions of confusion, fear and even panic were catalysts for his movement away from physical contact with the girl. To avoid the bad feelings attached to the girl hugging him, Lucas moved away from FTF contact with her to explore his intimate connection through the digital locations of Kik and Facebook.

Lucas’ sideways movement into the digital spaces of Kik and then Facebook offered him a way of avoiding physical contact and the emotions attached to this awkward situation. His narrative illustrated one way that he used digital environments to explore intimacy. His process of moving to the side of expected or normative behaviours, illustrated Stockton’s (2009) argument that media and technology can be vehicles that young people use to grow sideways during socially sanctioned periods of intimate and sexual delay. For Lucas and the girl, the sites of Kik and Facebook offered alternative pathways or “hidden access” (Stockton, 2009, p. 120) to sites of intimacy, and further opportunities to explore and express emotions away from physical FTF contact.

This sideways movement away from emotional expression in person, offered an example of how Lucas was adhering to “the social pressure to maintain the signs of “getting along” (Ahmed, 2010a p.39) which is a practice often attributed to women. Lucas’ narrative suggests that he was enduring physical and emotional contact with the girl when he said, “every day she would hug him, and he would go “help me”. His compliant behaviour suggested that he was “maintaining [the] public comfort” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39) of the girl and others in the school ground. He appeared to have achieved this, through enduring the girl’s hugs, and by moving their intimate engagements away from their physical world into digital intimate public spaces.

Ahmed’s (2004a, 2010a) concept of sticky emotions is helpful when thinking about Lucas’ behaviour. Through this lens, it is possible to see that the feelings of helplessness,

frustration and fear attached to his experience of the girl's hug, remained stuck to his memory of the event. The way Lucas described the situation, and the violent banging on the desk that accompanied his story, highlighted the drama still attached to the experience. This drama was conveyed through the repetition of the phrase "it was the worst", and his constant pounding on the desk. Through the repetition of his words, the harsh banging sounds that punctuated his words, and the constant jumping of the camera, Lucas' frustration moved around in the space created between himself, his story and the viewers of his film. Through the process of avoiding physical contact and emotion with the girl at school, Lucas resisted challenging the power dynamic that appeared to be operating between him and the girl. His data suggested that he avoided the drama and emotion of the FTF situation when he "messed the girl trying to say that he wants to break up with her" on Kik.

The emotions of frustration and confusion appear to remain attached to Lucas' story of intimacy conducted across both physical and digital locations. Ahmed (2010a) argued that "feelings get stuck to certain bodies [...] and bodies can get stuck depending on what feelings they get associated with" (p. 39). Lucas' narrative and individual comments such as, "but the worst thing was he didn't know what to do! He didn't know how to break up with her. It was the worst", illustrated this point. Lucas' comments also highlighted how strong feelings of confusion fear; panic and anxiety remained stuck to his experience of both emotion and intimacy even though he tried to avoid these emotions by moving to Kik and Facebook. The intensity of the emotions conveyed in the film, illustrated that the emotions Lucas initially experienced, remained attached and powerfully stuck to his experience of emotion and intimacy well after the original event had passed.

For Lucas, the sites of Facebook and Kik could be understood as the digital "vehicles" (Stockton, 2009, p. 120) he used to move away from his role of the boy who cried "help me" to become a more agentic young man growing sideways through access to digital media. The ability

to move his emotional and intimate relationship away from FTF, offered Lucas a space where he could avoid expressing the emotions of frustration, confusion and anger in person. Through the process of moving his intimate connections from FTF to digital spaces, Lucas did three things. He avoided undesired physical and emotional contact, he demonstrated his awareness of the social pressure he felt to appear to be “getting along” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39) with the girl at school, and he created an opportunity for himself to grow to the side of expected and normative notions of growing upward toward heterosexual coupling facilitated through FTF contact.

Lucas’ experience offers an alternative view to the common discourse that frames young men as incapable of the “emotional work” (Holford, 2019, p. 163) required to manage and regulate feelings within heterosexual relationships. In contrast to the “emotionally under developed man” that Holford (2019, p. 163) identified was common across the literature, Lucas’ narrative illustrated that he took responsibility for himself and his confusing emotional experience by creating a space between himself and the girl to manage the feelings that were overwhelming him. His decision to remove himself from the unwanted display of physical emotion and intimacy demonstrated a level of emotional maturity rarely attributed to young men. This act of disconnection from challenging emotions also demonstrated Lucas’ willingness to step away from the power struggle that was occurring between “the girl” who wanted physical contact and “the boy” who did not know what to do to resist her desire for physical intimacy.

Data moments presented in this section, illustrate how two young people aged 11-14 used digital intimate public spaces to express, explore or avoid emotion in person. Through an analysis of data instances from Sophia and Lucas, I have demonstrated that digital intimate publics offered these two young people the environment they needed to explore and express emotions that led to intimate experiences, in ways that FTF encounters did not. These discussions also challenged the common narrative that young men do not talk about their feelings or are emotionally underdeveloped (Holford 2019). Finally, these discussions offered insight into a more complex

picture of two young men's (Lucas and Sophia's boyfriend) capacity to express emotion, and the affect that emotion had on their experiences of intimacy (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a). Sophia's and Lucas' narratives also illustrated how emotions remained attached to intimate experiences and how these sticky emotions might affect intimate experiences into the future.

8.3 Confusion, Frustration and Anger: Growing Sideways

The focus on difficult or unpleasant intimate experiences was common across data. In the following discussion, I explore the way emotions of confusion and helplessness stuck to the intimate experiences described by Lucas, Sophia and Jackson. Focusing on the details of three participants' data relating to emotions in more detail, I once again explore Lucas' narrative but this time in its entirety. The practice of analysing the same data from a different perspective queers the normative research practice (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012). In this study, this process offered a new way to explore Lucas' experience of intimacy and moments of sideways growth each time data were reanalysed.

8.3.1 The stickiness of confusion, frustration and anger. In the following data moment, I once again consider Lucas' narrative to investigate the emotions attached to an intimate experience narrated as confusing. In the previous Section 8.2.2, I used an extract from Lucas' narrative to demonstrate the way he used digital intimate publics to explore emotion away from an uncomfortable physical FTF experience. In the following exploration of the complete narrative from his short film, I focus on the details of his narrative in totality, to consider how Lucas' experience of emotion afforded him multiple opportunities for sideways growth (Stockton, 2009).

Lucas discussed his intimate experience as a fictitious story during which he referred to himself in the third person.

Once upon a time, there was this boy and a woman. This is my story. But the boy didn't like the girl in the way. So then, the girl liked the boy in the way and that's a love-hate

relationship. An one day, the girl asked out the boy, and the boy was too nice to say no. Yeah and so they ended up dating, but the worst thing was he didn't know what to do! He didn't know how to break up with her. It was the worst! So then, every day she would hug him, and he would go "help me". An so then, it was the worst for him. And then, one day over Kik, the boy messaged the girl trying to say that he wants to break up with her. But instead, it make the girl like him more. And then, the next day at school, she gave the boy Facebook a request. And then the boy accepted it. And they started talking over Facebook. And then they moved over to KIK cause you can delete the messages. And then the boy said, "I don't want to be with you anymore" and the girl didn't really understand. And she thought that they were still together. And she still thinks to [that?] day. I don't think she does anymore, I don't know, but then, that's all. It ends (Lucas SF, 2016).

The confusion and frustration that Lucas recalled and demonstrated in his narrative suggests that his fear of what might happen to him if he was not 'nice', propelled him to perform 'nice' as he conformed to the normative expectations and conventions of his social world. In turn, his performance of 'nice' led him to participate in an activity that he did not want to consent to but that he engaged in anyway. During the process of retelling his story, the emotions of confusion and frustration "he didn't know how to break up with her. It was the worst!", were stuck to the story of his inability to articulate non-consent, to say "no" or to resist the girl's physical advances.

Throughout the film, Lucas' voice changed in tone and volume and became high pitched as he conveyed the helplessness, horror and resistance he felt during his intimate experience. He recalled that these feelings were "the worst for him". Although his narrative suggested that he performed 'nice' in order to be acceptable to the girl, his private narrative indicated that his performance of being 'nice' was conflicting for him because he "was too nice to say no". The emotions of confusion and helplessness appeared attached to his experience of performing nice. These feelings appeared to be moving with him and increasing in intensity as he recalled his experience during the creative filmmaking process. Lucas' actions, his words and his voice

conveyed the heightened anxiety attached to these emotions, his movement and sideways growth as he recalled this difficult experience. As he talked about his intimate experience, he appeared to work through his confusing and uncomfortable feelings to emerge less attached to those negative and frustrating emotions.

By the end of the film, Lucas emerged with new feelings of control and a desire to stop performing “nice”. During the 1.24 minutes of his film, Lucas became a boy who was no longer performing nice. His narrative and the developing anger he displayed in his film toward the “nice” boy was confronting in its ability to draw the viewer into his emotional world. These strong emotions appeared to demonstrate that the innocent child, the passive child, the boy performing “nice” was fighting back as he worked through the emotions he was experiencing and expressing on film. The energy and (e)motion generated through the creative filmmaking method appeared to help Lucas move through the emotions of confusion, frustration, anger and his desire to be a boy who performed “nice”.

Considering Lucas’ actions through the lens of the queer child (Stockton, 2009) and the concept of sticky emotions (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a), I began to ask myself many questions about this young man’s performance of emotion and intimacy. As I spent more time with Lucas’ narrative and began to analyse it for different reasons, I wondered if he was displaying fear. I wondered if he was afraid of being angry with the girl, or, if he was afraid of being angry with himself, or his recollection of performing “nice”. Could he have been afraid of himself and his capacity to be anything but nice? Is the confusion that Lucas conveyed in his film, when he said

an one day, the girl asked out the boy, and the boy was too nice to say no. Yeah and so they ended up dating, but the worst thing was he didn’t know what to do! He didn’t know how to break up with her,

actually his fear of the sideways movements that occurred as he emerged from being a child queered by innocence to become a child with “an unnamed aggressive motivation” (Stockton,

2009, p. 28)? Is it possible that through the sticky emotions of confusion, helplessness, frustration and anger that Lucas was growing sideways and breaking away from his performance of being the nice boy, the innocent boy who “was too nice to say no”?

Stockton (2009) reminded us through her analysis and discussion of a young woman in the film *Hard Candy* (2005), that the innocent child of fiction often grows sideways through anger and “aggressive wishes” (p. 27) as she shakes off the shackles of childhood innocence. In her analysis of young people in modern fiction, Stockton (2009) depicted several versions of the child queered by innocence who grew sideways beyond passivity and compliance, to become an angry and aggressive child. This innocent child who eventually sought revenge, was represented in fiction as the innocent child “who isn’t going to take it any more” (Stockton, 2009, p. 129). In a similar way to the young people depicted across fiction, Lucas moved from performing a story about a confused and helpless “nice” victim, to the clarity that he was not going to perform “nice” anymore.

As evidenced in the entire transcript of his film, Lucas’ narrative progressed from a boy who “was too nice to say no” to a boy who had the clarity to articulate his intention when he said, “I don’t want to be with you anymore”. Throughout the course of his film, Lucas appeared to grow sideways through the energy and vitality of articulating the (e)motion that his experience of intense emotion and intimacy with the girl generated (Stockton 2009). Lucas’ experience of exploring his emotions of helplessness, confusion and frustration to then arrive at feelings of anger, appeared to have offered him an opportunity to grow sideways exploring sticky emotions and feelings about intimacy that were not related to reproduction or notions of normative upward growth (Stockton 2009).

Through the process of exploring feelings attached to the dark, unwanted or shadowy aspects of human intimacy, Lucas emerged as a young man queered by anger. What then do we do with the child/young person queered by anger who performs nice but at the same time is not

feeling nice? How does the child/young person queered by anger move beyond performing nice and feeling angry? How does a young man like Lucas move beyond the stickiness of emotions like helplessness, confusion and frustration that generated an experience of intimacy and emotion recalled with anger and uncertainty? How do young men like Lucas move beyond emotions that result in aggressive or violent physical behaviours when these behaviours are intolerable in a social environment that seeks to contain all representations of anger—particularly in young men? These unresolved questions and the stickiness of feeling confusion and frustration for young men like Lucas, have remained stuck to my experience of exploring this data with him.

Lucas' narrative suggested that his experience of intimacy was at times unbearable. His narrative of feeling confused, helpless and frustrated offered an example of an experience of intimacy that resonated with what Bollmer (2018) described as the “variable and often contradictory mode of experience that undergirds daily life” (p. 49). His repeated use of the word “worst” reinforced the unbearability of being hugged, of not knowing how to break up with the girl, and of not being able to make the girl understand him. However, the unbearability of Lucas' intimate experience was not associated with the loss or longing for connection that Bollmer (2018) associated with the unbearability of intimacy. In direct contrast to Bollmer's (2018) example, the unbearable nature of Lucas' intimate experience was associated with closeness, proximity and an intimate connection that he did not want. Therefore, Lucas experienced the unbearability of intimacy through the closeness of emotions and physical intimacy rather than loss or longing. Lucas' experience challenges the heteronormative notion that physical intimacy is the most desirable form of intimacy for young people who have access to digital intimacy.

Lucas' narrative illustrated that he was struggling with the pressure of conforming to a social convention of being nice. The lack of discussion across the literature, about young male experiences of feeling pressured to perform nice, highlights that the notion of being nice is a gendered concept usually attributed to women (Wolfe 2015). Lucas' comment that he was too

“nice to say no” challenged the notion that the “discourse of niceness” (Wolfe, 2015, p. 123) is associated with femininity. Like the young women in Wolfe’s (2015) study, Lucas’ performance of “nice” represented a “silencing of dissent” (Wolfe, 2015, p. 123) and his desire to maintain an acceptable level of public comfort around him (Ahmed, 2010a). In a similar manner to the white, middle class school girls Wolfe (2015) discussed in her study, Lucas had a “desire to be seen as nice” (p. 123). However, what Lucas’ narrative points to is that his desire to be seen or known as nice is not a gendered desire but rather, a human desire that can be shared by individuals of any gender. Lucas’ narrative demonstrates that young men can also be called upon to produce themselves as “desirable heterosexual subjects” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 422) in ways often discussed only in relation to young women (Ahmed, 2010a; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019; Wolfe, 2015).

An understanding of a more complex view of male intimacy through the exploration of Lucas’ emotional and intimate experiences, highlighted that navigating intimacy can be a complex endeavour for individuals of any gender. Through this new understanding, I contribute to knowledge and offer a more nuanced and complex picture of the complexity of the intimate life of a young man under the age of 15. This new understanding, helps to queer the normative notion of “hard masculinity” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 422) attributed to men in general and in particular, to young men exploring intimacy on line (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Holford, 2019; Ringrose et al., 2013; Salter, 2018). In the next section, I turn from the emotions of confusion, frustration and anger to examine how the emotions of confusion, upset and disappointment affected Sophia and remained attached to her experiences of intimacy, framing them as challenging and unsatisfactory.

8.3.2 The (e)motion of confusion, upset and disappointment. In this section, I once again explore data from Sophia. I turn to Sophia’s experiences of emotion and intimacy because over the course of her 22.37-minute film, she discussed three different intimate relationships. In

the following data instance, Sophia described the details of an emotional and intimate experience she found confusing, upsetting and that made her feel disappointed with herself.

On Facebook, me and my ex we talked a lot. Until just recently, last Thursday. He texted me on Facebook and said he loved me and wanted to be with me again. And I actually believed him! He said things were going to change and he won't do anything to hurt me. Well, that didn't last very long, cause the next day, he said he didn't really care about me anymore. I was pretty upset. I was really don't know what to say or what to do. I just cried and cried. Texted him on Facebook and I'm like, all right it's over then. I can't come back. I can't believe I fell for it a third time. A third time! I'm really disappointed in myself, to be honest. Cause the third time, I thought it was going to work, and I thought everything was going to be good, but he broke it and now I told him, we can't be friends anytime soon (Sophia SF, 2016).

In this data instance, Sophia described the details of her intimate experience that generated feelings of frustration and disappointment. These details offered a unique insight into the intimate and emotional lives of two young people under the age of 15.

Sophia described the young man in her narrative as her "ex" when she said "on Facebook, me and my ex, we talked a lot". During her long monologue to camera, Sophia narrated her impression of the exchange of emotions that occurred between the two of them and identified her own feelings and emotional response to the situation. Sophia recalled that the young man expressed emotions of love and remorse when she said he "said he loved me" and "he said things were going to change and he won't do anything to hurt me again". Sophia expressed emotions of frustration with herself that she "actually believed him" when he said things would change. She also expressed her upset and disappointment with herself when she said, "I'm really disappointed in myself to be honest". The emotions of frustration, upset and disappointment appeared to be stuck to her experience and the intensity or value of their affect appears directed back at herself for believing that her boyfriend would change (Ahmed, 2004a). The "affective economy" (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121) and negative value of Sophia's feelings of frustration and disappointment

were not directed or moving outward into the world but rather, they appear to be internalised, and this movement around the value of these emotions appears to have caused an internal or “psychic” (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 121) exchange within Sophia.

In this instance, Sophia appeared to take responsibility for getting herself into the upsetting situation of being “hurt” by her boyfriend “a third time”. Her confessional narrative to camera suggests she took responsibility for the “emotional work” (Holford, 2019, p. 73) of trying to understand what went wrong within her intimate relationship with her ex. The labour of engaging in the emotional work of trying to understand what happened in her relationship was evident in her statement, “I was really, don’t know what to say or what to do. I just cried and cried. Texted him on Facebook and I’m like, all right it’s over then. I can’t come back. I can’t believe I fell for it a third time. A third time!” In this comment, Sophia accepted responsibility for her decision to go out with her ex for a third time. Her assessment of the situation suggests she accepted the “burden of making good choices and wise decisions” (Holford, 2019, p. 74) about associated with her intimate relationship.

Sophia’s punishing self-analysis suggested that she felt responsible for the pain and heartache caused by the breakdown of the relationship with her boyfriend. Her statement that she “can’t believe I fell for it a third time” indicates that she accepted that the emotional work of relationships is a gendered responsibility that she claimed for herself because she believed her ex when he “said he loved me” and that “things were going to change”. Throughout her narrative, Sophia continued to do the emotional work of thinking about what happened in her relationship. This emotional work and her willingness to explore the stickiness of the emotions of frustration, confusion and disappointment appear to have offered her an opportunity to reflect on her experience and grow sideways to arrive at a clear understanding that she and the boyfriend “can’t be friends anytime soon”.

During the course of her exploration of the sticky emotions of confusion and disappointment, Sophia moved from being the child queered by innocence and naivety to being a child queered by upset and disappointment at herself. This shift is evident when she said, “cause the third time I thought it was going to work, and I thought everything was going to be good, but he broke it”. The stickiness of the emotions of confusion and upset that attached to the comment “I was pretty upset. I was really don’t know what to say or what to do. I just cried and cried” appeared to offer Sophia a way to grow sideways through the uncomfortable and frustrating (e)motions and energy of exploring her intimate life in the shadows of normative upward notions of intimacy (Stockton, 2009). Therefore, the process of exploring intimacy through fractured digital exchanges appeared to challenge Sophia’s normative notion of intimacy.

Sophia’s normative view was characterised by spending time together in person and feeling a sense of intimacy through the “looks and body language” (Jamieson, 2013, p. 13) commonly associated with reproductive and heterosexual notions of intimacy. This analysis of Sophia’s data instance suggested that she created a sideways movement through confusion and disappointment. Through the process of exploring the emotions that stuck to her experience of intimacy, Sophia arrived at a new decision about what she wanted from an intimate experience. Her final statement “and now I told him we can’t be friends anytime soon”, indicated that through an experience of unbearable intimacy (Bollmer, 2018), Sophia grew sideways and took control of her intimate life by removing herself from emotional exchanges with a person that she said hurt her and did not “really care about me anymore”.

The sticky emotions of frustration and disappointment are emotional states that circulated through many studies that explored the intimate lives of young people (Holford, 2019; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019). Sophia’s narratives, about her intimate experience of frustrating and disappointing emotions, resonated with Holford’s (2019) recent study exploring the intimate relationships of young people aged 14-16. Sophia’s comment of “he said things were going to

change and he won't do anything to hurt me. Well, that didn't last very long" illustrated the kind of emotional work that Holford (2019) argued is the burden of many "young middle class women" (p. 73) involved in heterosexual relationships. However, Sophia's narrative differs in some ways from the intimate experiences discussed in Holford's (2019) study because she revealed that her boyfriend was capable of communicating and expressing emotion when "he texted me on Facebook and said he loved me" but chose to do it selectively. On the issue of emotional expression through technology, Naezer and Ringrose (2019) noted the way SMP afforded young people freedom to "have intensely emotional, vulnerable conversations" (p. 423) beyond the gaze of their parents. The data analysed in this study also indicated that young people seek online spaces to experience intimacy beyond the penetrating gaze of an "in person" intimate experience. Sophia's comments appear to support Naezer and Ringrose's (2019) finding because Sophia explained that her boyfriend was comfortable expressing emotion and declaring love through their exchanges on Facebook. Sophia's recollection of her intimate experience offers an insight into the types of vulnerable exchanges that she and her boyfriend engaged in as they explored intimacy and expressed emotion on Facebook.

Throughout her long narrative, the conflicted emotions of confusion, upset and disappointment remained attached to Sophia's experience of a challenging and unsatisfactory experience of intimacy. The complexity of her intimate relationship and the emotions generated through this experience of intimacy point toward a young woman caught between the tension of desiring intimacy but strong enough in her sense of self to demand a form of intimacy that was emotionally consistent across digital environments and "in person" locations. This tension points to Bollmer's (2018) notion of the unbearability of intimacy characterised by longing and loss of intimate connection.

However, Sophia's narrative and experience of conflicted intimacy also highlights the important work that the stickiness of emotions performs as young people move to the side of

expected delay framed by notions of childhood innocence. Through the process of experiencing intense emotions, Sophia explored the suspensions and shadows (Stockton 2009) of her normative notion of heterosexual FTF intimacy. Through this process she arrived at an understanding within herself, that she wanted and expected intimacy that was emotionally consistent and aligned to her desire for “in person” emotional expression. By exploring her sticky emotions, Sophia established and articulated new personal rules to guide her intimate experiences both within digital environments and through FTF contact into the future (Byron & Albury, 2018).

In the next and final narrative illustrating the connection between sticky emotions, intimate experiences and sideways growth, I consider the way Jackson described the anger he felt toward a young woman who sent him an unsolicited sexualised message.

8.3.3 The suspensions and shadows of anger and disgust. Emotions of frustration and anger attached to several participants’ intimate experiences. In Section 8.3.1, I discussed the anger that emerged as Lucas explored his feelings of intimacy. In the following data instance, I consider Jackson’s experience of feeling angry after he received an unsolicited nude. Jackson’s narrative is interesting because his anger contrasts the calm acceptance displayed by Aiden when he also received an unsolicited nude (see discussion in Chapter 7, Section 7.3.1).

Well, this random girl sent me a nude and as most boy[s] would, I thought I’d be intrigued, but I actually wasn’t. I thought it was disgusting! I sort of hate that sort of thing. And like, just nudes in particular just nudes. Just Girls naked it’s just wrong. I don’t know why, I’m really respectful of women, but yeah and I don’t know what to feel. Like, I didn’t even know her but then I realised that she wasn’t actually friends with me but just friends of a friend. You shouldn’t be friending people that are friend of a friend. Or, if you don’t know ‘em, don’t accept them. It’s bad. Could be paedophiles or just like random friend of a friend. That’s just weird. Now what I’m trying to say was that if you see a nude just delete it. It’s pretty much child pornography. Might as well report them if you don’t know ‘em (Jackson & Lucas SF, 2016).

Jackson's narrative highlights a range of emotions that stuck to his uncomfortable experience of unwanted sexual intimacy. The way emotions remained attached to Jackson's experience of receiving an unsolicited nude is evident when he stated, "I thought it was disgusting! I sort of hate that sort of thing". While stuck in the anger, disgust and judgement of discussing the "random" girl who sent him a nude, Jackson's narrative moved sideways to explore his feelings of anger about various other online practices.

Throughout this instance, Jackson engaged in a lengthy description of the many things he disliked about exploring intimacy online. For example, Jackson discussed his feelings about the practice of liking friends of friends. His negative attitude towards this practice is evident when he said, "you shouldn't be friending people who are friend of a friend." It is possible that Jackson's positioning as the receiver of the nude image, sent to him from someone he did not know, stirred up feelings of anger that already existed in Jackson's mind about digital sharing practices.

Ahmed's (2010a) notion that emotions are generated by what is in front and "what is behind the object, the conditions of its arrival" (p. 33) is a helpful concept through which to analyse Jackson's experience of receiving an unsolicited nude. The possibility that the emotions Jackson expressed had been stuck with him for some time was evident when he explained, "like I didn't even know her, but then I realised that she wasn't actually friends with me but just friends of a friend".

Jackson's tone of voice and his angry and judgemental words when combined with further statements, such as "just girls naked it's just wrong", suggested that he was angry and frustrated that girls in general send nude images to people they hardly know online. In addition, he was emotional and angry that one girl in particular sent him a nude image without his consent. As discussed in the previous chapter (Section 7.2.2), the connective practice of liking friends of friends was challenging for Jackson. In this moment of queering my analysis of Jackson's emotional response, I move sideways to relate his angry and emotional narrative about the receipt

of the nude back to his confused and conflicted feelings about the practice of liking friends of a friend.

Making this backward connection it appears possible to imagine that the strong emotions Jackson expressed in his narrative had been stuck to him for some time and thus, they had determined the “conditions of arrival” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 33) and the emotions generated when he received the unsolicited nude. In this data instance, Jackson was dismissive of his connection with “this random girl” who he said he “didn’t even know” only to later state “she wasn’t actually friends with me but just friends of a friend”. His complicated narrative suggested that he felt pressured to be friends with “random” people and conform to others’ expectations of adhering to the social convention of being digital friends with people who were not friends but the friends of friends. However in this narrative, Jackson’s comments suggest he grew to the side of the normative expectation that he would enjoy or welcome receipt of a nude from a girl (Ringrose et al., 2013). Instead of a normative response, his experience indicated that the receipt of the unsolicited nude helped him to establish his own personal rules to deal with unwanted intimate exchanges online.

Jackson’s narrative could also be understood through Ahmed’s (2010a) idea that drama makes emotions stickier and more intense. The challenging emotions attached to the “dramas” (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39) of girls sending nudes and the practice of friending friends of friends appeared to have stuck to Jackson’s intimate experiences. His comments that “you shouldn’t be friending people that are friend of a friend. Or, if you don’t know ‘em, don’t accept them. It’s bad”, suggested that accepting friend requests from “friends of friends” had no value in a similar way that receiving nudes had no value for him. Jackson’s narrative illustrated that there was drama attached to sending and receiving nude images, girls being naked and the practice of liking friends of friends. In fact, he extended the sense of drama associated with these practices to equate them with engaging with paedophiles online. This is evident when he said, “don’t accept

them. It's bad. Could be paedophiles. [...] Now, what I'm trying to say was that if you see a nude just delete it. It's pretty much child pornography."

Jackson's narrative about unsolicited nudes, resonates with Byron and Albury's (2018) argument that an aversion to sexualised image sharing can occur because many young people understand unsolicited sexual images are often "sent by men masquerading as women" (p. 219). Through the emotions that stuck to his story of receiving a nude image Jackson appears to be learning to speak his mind and live by his personal rules rather than follow social conventions that normatively assume young men like Jackson will be happy to receive nude images from young women (Ringrose et al. 2013). Finally, his statement, "might as well report them if you don't know 'em", exemplified the intensity and drama attached to Jackson's experience of receiving an unsolicited nude image online. His final statement highlighted how engaged Jackson was in the drama of this experience and how little interest he had in appreciating or enjoying a nude image sent to him from a young woman. The fact that he did not value the nude image in any way offers another example of the way Jackson is growing to the side of normative heterosexual expectations about the intimate interests of young men (Dobson & Ringrose, 2015; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015b).

For Jackson, his sideways growth (Stockton 2009) toward a recognition of his own personal rules about intimate digital practices, appeared to have occurred through a process of examining his feelings of confusion, disgust and hatred about girls sharing unsolicited nude images and the potential negative consequences of liking "random" friends of friends online. His comments also offer an example of oversharing (Kennedy, 2018) or non-consensual sharing when sexual images are sent "at the wrong time" (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 219). In Byron and Albury's (2018) study, both men and women discussed the problematic nature of dealing with sexualised flirting via image exchange that happened too quickly. Considered in isolation, the stickiness, energy and effect of Jackson's feelings of disgust and annoyance at the practice of

sending unsolicited nudes could easily be mistaken for the comments of an aggressive young man who shamed and negatively judged the behaviour of a young woman who shared a nude image with him.

However, there is another, queer way to think about Jackson's angry commentary. It is possible to argue that Jackson's commentary and non-normative view of the practice is an example of sideways growth occurring through feelings of disgust, annoyance and outrage that stuck to his experience of intimacy (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a). If Jackson's response to the nude was considered in relation to his feelings of being pressured into liking friends of friends (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2.2), then it is possible to imagine that his feelings of disgust and outrage facilitated his growth to the side of expected normative development. As he moved with the energy of the powerful (e)motion caused by sticky feelings of disgust and outrage, it is possible to argue that Jackson learned to shake off the pressure of abiding by social conventions and in doing so established personal rules to guide his future digital intimate practices.

Jackson's comments and dislike of the practice of sending unsolicited nudes demonstrated an alternative view on the practice of sexting that challenges normative and widely accepted understandings about how young men initiate and control the practice of sexting in digital intimacy (Ringrose & Harvey, 2015b; Waling & Pym, 2019). When he said "I thought it was disgusting!", Jackson challenged the notion of "desirable masculinity for boys" (Ringrose et al., 2013, p. 312) who are normatively framed as the instigators of sexting practices. Furthermore, Jackson's response to the experience challenged the sexual double standard of "female passivity and male action" that Ringrose et al. (2013, p. 312) suggested was common among sexual image exchanges.

Jackson's response to being sent an unsolicited nude also illustrates Ringrose and Harvey's (2015b) point that when girls send nude images (either unsolicited or when asked) the decision to send a sexual image must be "managed carefully" (p. 209) because the risk of being "slut" (p.

209) shamed by boys or girls is very real. Furthermore, his comments also resonate with Byron and Albury's (2018) point that women who "self-sexualise" (p. 226) within digital environments are at greater risk of breaking normative and gendered moral codes of conduct.

However, at the same time the stickiness of his anger and hatred of the practice of girls sending nudes continues a common discourse of shaming young women who share their sexuality online. Although Jackson says he is "respectful of women", his comment that he "thought it was disgusting" illustrated that he thought girls sending nude images was unacceptable and offensive. His comments that the practice of girls sending nudes and "girls naked" was "wrong" "disgusting", "bad" and "weird" echoes the common discourse of shame that seek to tame the sexualised behaviours of young women. His comment "just girls naked it's just wrong" highlighted the gendered nature of his views and illustrates that "slut shaming practices" (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 423) thrive in the everyday intimate experiences of this young man who argued that he is "really respectful of women".

The stickiness of the emotions moving around and between the people in Jackson's narrative generated intense experiences for him that led to opportunities for sideways growth (Stockton 2009). Jackson's sideways growth toward exploring his intimate life through adhering to his personal rules (Byron & Albury, 2018), rather than following social conventions (Dobson et al. 2018a), was evident in his narrative when he described emotions of disgust and hatred. His response to the nude challenges the normative notions of male "sexual prowess online" (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019, p. 431) and the image of sexually aggressive masculinity. At the same time, Jackson's response resonates with findings from a study conducted by Ringrose and Harvey (2015b) who identified that "some boys explicitly challenged" (p. 214) the normative acceptance of non-consensual sharing of sexualised images. Jackson's anger at receiving a nude and his disapproval of "that sort of thing and like nudes in particular, just nudes" challenged the normative perception of the receptive male voyeur, "asking girls for images of their bodies"

(Ringrose & Harvey, 2015b, p. 210). Jackson's narrative more closely aligns with findings from Naezer and Ringrose (2019) who argued, young people of all genders reproduce and disrupt normative notions of gendered behaviours and gendered discourse about intimate and sexual expression online. Jackson's narrative also demonstrated that the stickiness of disgust and hatred can attach to individuals and worlds (Ahmed 2004a) and thus, reinforce gendered discourse about intimacy and sexualised digital sharing practices.

8.4 Conclusion

In this final data discussion chapter, I have shown through a focus on the details of three participants' experiences, that expression of emotions flourished within digital intimate public spaces. The discussion of data instances from Sophia, Lucas and Jackson demonstrated that all these three participants used digital places to both express emotion and to retreat from the unbearability of intense "in person" emotional experiences. The concept of sticky emotions (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a) and Stockton's (2009) argument that sideways growth occurs through exploring the suspensions and shadows of normative upward growth, helped to illuminate the many ways that emotions associated with "bad feelings" (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 30) offered these participants opportunities to grow sideways through periods of "managed delay" (Stockton, 2009, p. 40). The examination of these three participants' experiences of intimacy offered multiple examples of the behavioural practices of sharing within digital intimate public spaces, and how these spaces generated (e)motions that offered young people opportunities to experience intimacy and grow sideways during a time framed through normative notions of delay (Stockton, 2009).

While offering insight into the complexity of several young people's intimate and emotional experiences, the exploration of the stickiness of emotion attached to Lucas', Sophia's, and Jackson's experiences of intimacy generated many questions. For example, what is it about the unbearable nature (Bollmer, 2018) of emotions that generated a lingering experience of intimacy for these young people? What propelled these young people to share the details of their

intimate lives, and to expose the unbearability of their experience of exploring the uncomfortableness of intimacy? Was it the creative filmmaking method? Was it the time and space that the creative filmmaking method offered the participants to talk about their intimate experiences with their friends? Was it the time, space and creative opportunity to explore their experiences of emotion and intimacy with themselves, or was it the energy and vitality of sideways growth? These questions point to the potential for learning that is possible when young people explore intimacy in the shadows of upward normative growth. The possibilities for learning analysed in this thesis, appeared to be associated with the participants ability to explore the stickiness of emotions that lingered and attached themselves to their experiences of intimacy. These questions illustrate the sticky nature of emotions and highlight how the effect of certain emotions, influenced the intimate experiences of these young people. As this chapter concludes the analysis of data in this thesis, I now turn to a discussion of the conclusions drawn from the exploration of data before offering the implications of this study and recommendations for further research.

Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Introduction

The research documented in this thesis generated visual artefacts that presented the voices of young people aged 11-14 as data. The research aim was to facilitate a process where these 10 young people independently documented the experiences of intimacy that were of most importance to them. The study incorporated an after queer theoretical approach (Talbert & Rasmussen, 2010) using Stockton's (2009) concept of the queer child growing sideways across both the design and analysis phases. A subjunctive methodology (Talbert, 2010) and a short term ethnographic approach (Pink & Morgan, 2013) using creative visual methods (Allen, 2013b; Iverson & Renold, 2016), supported 10 participants to produce 13 self-generated short films. These short films are more than data; they are works of art that resonate with Renold's (2018) concept of d/artaphacts. D/artaphacts are data produced in works of art that travel across time and space to inform others about the content of the research enquiry. Through the creative filmmaking method, 10 young people created unique d/artaphacts discussing their thoughts, ideas and feelings about their lived experiences of intimacy.

An evolving form of queer theory directed both the theoretical and methodological approach of this study. Across three data discussion chapters, I engaged with three queer concepts including Stockton's (2009) queer child growing sideways, digital intimate publics as discussed by Dobson, Carah, et al. (2018), and Ahmed's (2004b, 2010a) concept of sticky emotions. After completing both a diffractive analysis (Barad, 2007; Taguchi & Palmer, 2013) and a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), I used these three queer concepts to explore the themes of locations of intimacy, behavioural practices of intimacy and emotions and intimacy. To begin the data discussion, I examined the locations where participants explored intimacy. I then considered the behaviours that generated intimacy. To conclude, I analysed how digital environments

facilitated the expression of emotions, including confusion, disappointment, frustration and anger that remained stuck to the participants' experiences of intimacy (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a). New understandings were generated about the intimate lives of 10 young people aged 11-14, through the exploration of these three themes. These understandings contribute new knowledge to three of the gaps identified across the literature.

The first contribution offers insights into the rarely considered intimate and digital lives of young people aged 11-14. This is an important and timely contribution as little about the intimate lives of young people under the age of 15 has been researched (Igras et al., 2014; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019). The second contribution offers a detailed analysis and new understandings of three young men's intimate experiences. This contribution is significant, as the voices of young men are limited or regularly framed in negative terms across the literature (Fields, 2012; Holford, 2019; Ringrose & Harvey, 2015b). The third contribution made by this research expands the scope of queer inspired sexuality research to consider young people's experiences of intimacy beyond sexual intimacy. These three contributions offer new knowledge that emerged from a study framed by three research questions.

9.2 Research Questions

Three research questions guided this study. The two primary research questions were:

- How are young people aged 11-14 experiencing intimacy through their explorations in digital environments?
- How do young people's digital practices influence their experience of intimacy?

I focused on providing answers to the two primary research questions because of the rich data produced in the self-generated short films. Data from student participants' short films provided evidence of the many ways that young people aged 11-14 experienced intimacy, thus offering insights that answered both primary research questions.

Through the diffractive and thematic data analysis, it became apparent that the creative filmmaking method provided an engaging and productive way for young people to explore their lived experiences of intimacy in an autonomous and self-directed way. The insights gained through the analysis of participants' films offered alternative ways of exploring, critiquing, discussing and sharing understandings about intimacy and the feelings associated with intimate experiences. These insights help to provide answers to the secondary research question.

- How does a self-generated creative filmmaking method support young people aged 11-14, to explore their experiences of intimacy within an educational context?

While not addressing this secondary research question explicitly in this thesis, evidence of the many ways that the self-generated creative filmmaking method supported the participants in exploring, discussing and re-imagining their experiences of intimacy within an educational context, abounds in data and the discussions conducted throughout this thesis. In future publications, I intend to explore this question through an exploration of data from the video elicitation interviews that were briefly discussed in Chapter 5.

9.3 Contributions to Knowledge

This study contributes new knowledge to three key gaps identified and discussed in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Through addressing these gaps, the study proffers six new understandings by building a more detailed picture of the intimate and digital lives of a small number of young people under the age of 15, and in particular, the intimate lives of three young men. The first understanding to emerge from this study highlights that young people aged 11-14 have complex and interesting intimate lives. This new understanding challenges the normative notion of the innocent child and validates the use of Stockton's (2009) concept of the queer child growing sideways. It recognises that although young people are marginalised and made queer through a range of intersecting modes of disadvantage, they continued to explore their intimate

lives through sideways relations that facilitated growth during normative periods of intimate and sexual delay.

The second understanding highlights that some young people aged 11-14 are using digital intimate public spaces that form on Facebook, Instagram and Kik to explore, experiment and experience emotions and intimacy in ways that are not occurring “in person”. Data indicate that digital intimate public spaces offered eight of these 10 young people the environments they needed to engage in behavioural practices of connecting, sharing and disconnecting. A key finding from this study is that digital intimate public spaces (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018) offered eight participants “hidden access to their interests, sexual or otherwise” (Stockton, 2009, p. 120) during periods of socially constructed intimate and sexual delay. Through engagement in digital intimate publics, these young people, queered by normative notions of innocence (Chambers, 2013b; Robards et al., 2018; Stockton, 2009, 2016) engaged in sharing behaviours producing emotions that generated experiences of intimacy. In addition to exploring new intimate experiences of attraction, digital intimate publics were important sites where participants cemented friendships, discussed and resolved problems and explored emotions associated with intimacy.

Digital intimate publics offered the participants spaces to explore and express emotion in ways that were not possible in their “in person” encounters. In turn, digital intimate public spaces provided the sites of emotional exploration that led to intimate experiences. The key digital intimate publics used by participants were Facebook and Kik. Facebook was identified as the site where female participants explored intimate attractions with young men previously unknown to them. This new understanding illustrates that these four young women aged 11-14 used Facebook as a dating or hook up site in ways that older Facebook users do not (Chambers, 2013b; Robards et al., 2018). By contrast, Kik was discussed as the IMS that participants identifying as young men, used to explore intimacy. This contribution points toward the many ways that participants of

varying genders used different digital intimate public spaces. In particular, the conclusion drawn from the analysis of data indicated that young female participants in this study used Facebook in ways that differed from adult users who favoured the platform to keep in touch with family (Cabalquinto, 2018) or to remain connected to childhood friends (Robards et al., 2018).

The third understanding recognises that eight of the 10 participants generated experiences of intimacy through the behavioural practice of sharing their thoughts and feelings online. Sharing behaviours included behaviours of connecting, acts of material and immaterial sharing, and acts of disconnection. These three sharing practices formed the basis of all the behaviours that led to experiences of intimacy. Therefore, the contribution to knowledge is the understanding that material and immaterial acts of sharing were the key behaviours productive of emotions that stuck to the participants' intimate experiences (Ahmed, 2004a, 2004b). Acts of material and immaterial sharing represented moments of sharing intimacy with the self and others. Finally, acts of disconnecting were sharing practices that facilitated a process of reconnecting or sharing more deeply with the self after separating from sharing with others. Through the back and forth process of sharing with others and sharing with the self, participants generated multiple experiences of intimacy and engaged in movements that facilitated sideways growth (Stockton 2009). Figure 15, visually represents the understanding that sharing of the self, formed the basis of the sharing practices that generated emotions and produced experiences that the participants described as intimate.



Figure 15. Behavioural practices of intimacy evolve through sharing of the self.

The fourth understanding highlights the critical relationship between engaging in sharing behaviours and the production of emotions. Eight of the 10 participants who explored intimacy within digital environments discussed a range of emotions, particularly those that were challenging or unresolved. One of the key understandings identified through the analysis of data illustrated that intense, challenging or troubling emotions stuck to participants' narratives of intimacy (Ahmed, 2010a). Although challenging emotional experiences are normatively framed as "bad feelings" (Ahmed, 2010a, p. 39) that generate negative affect, I have shown that the stickiness of uncomfortable or confusing feelings can have a positive effect that affords young people moments of sideways growth (Stockton, 2009). These moments of sideways growth occurred through the process of exploring and experiencing challenging emotions theorised as sideways relations or movements to the side of normative expectations of growth (Stockton, 2009). During these experiences of emotion generated by exploring intimacy in the shadows of normative and controlled upward growth, participants developed a greater sense of themselves as

emotional and intimate individuals with agency to direct their intimate lives and intimate experiences.

Without the knowledge or experience of the *tacit rules* that govern adult sharing practices (Kennedy, 2018) and direct adult intimate behaviours (Berlant, 1998, 2008), participants generated intimacy through acts of material and immaterial sharing that produced challenging emotions. The unfamiliarity of the feelings produced exploring intimacy and emotion through “practice based knowledge” (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 225), framed many of the participants’ experiences as negative or bad feelings. However, through the process of queering the normative notion that negative or bad feelings are counterproductive to growth, it is possible to recognise that by experiencing challenging or confusing feelings, the participants developed a sense of their boundaries around sharing themselves with others. This process of exploring personal rules, social conventions and establishing boundaries through sideways relations, can be understood as forms of learning that are essential to the actuality of sideways growth as theorised by Stockton (2009).

The fifth understanding to emerge contributes new knowledge about the intimate lives of three young men. Data from this study, challenged binary notions of the victim vs predator paradigms (Ringrose et al., 2013) and the discourse of the unemotional male (Holford, 2019). Data from Aiden and Lucas demonstrated that they experienced anxiety, frustration and confusion about their intimate experiences. Similarly, narratives from Lucas and Jackson suggested they regulated their behaviours to adhere to social expectations about how young men should behave. These expectations related to feeling pressured to perform “nice” and to participate in the “silencing of dissent” (Wolfe, 2015, p. 123) normatively associated with young women. The discussion of Jackson’s issues associated with accepting or liking friends of friends on Facebook, offered multiple examples of the way he felt pressured to conform to social conventions rather than live by his personal rules (Byron & Albury, 2018).

Finally, discussions from Jackson and Aiden's intimate experiences of receiving nudes, illustrated that the unsolicited and unwanted sexualised messages they received from young women troubled them. These narratives about receiving unsolicited nudes, demonstrated that two of the three young men in this study were challenged by receiving unsolicited sexual messages, in similar ways to the experiences of young women discussed in studies exploring the receipt of unsolicited dick picks (Morten Birk Hansen, 2019; Waling & Pym, 2019). These examples highlight that these two young men experienced challenging intimate and sexual feelings online. Their stories also illustrate that they were happy to discuss their intimate experiences and express emotion as part of the creative filmmaking process. The analysis of data from the three young men in this study, builds a more complex picture of the many ways that digital intimate publics can support young men to explore new and emerging forms of masculinity, emotion and intimacy (Cover, 2018, 2019).

The sixth and final understanding gained through this study, identifies the new and exciting opportunities that creative filmmaking offers educators working with young people to explore intimacy and relationships within educational contexts. Data collected from both self-generated short films and video elicitation interviews, identified that participants had little opportunity to explore, or discuss their intimate experiences prior to engaging in the creative filmmaking method. The participants' enthusiastic engagement in the creative filmmaking method, illustrated the affordances of a self-directed, creative process that recognised young people's agency, intimate subjectivity and their interest in exploring intimacy using everyday digital devices. Figure 16 offers a visual representation of the key understandings generated through an analysis of the d/artaphacts produced by the 10 participants who shared their experiences of intimacy in this study.

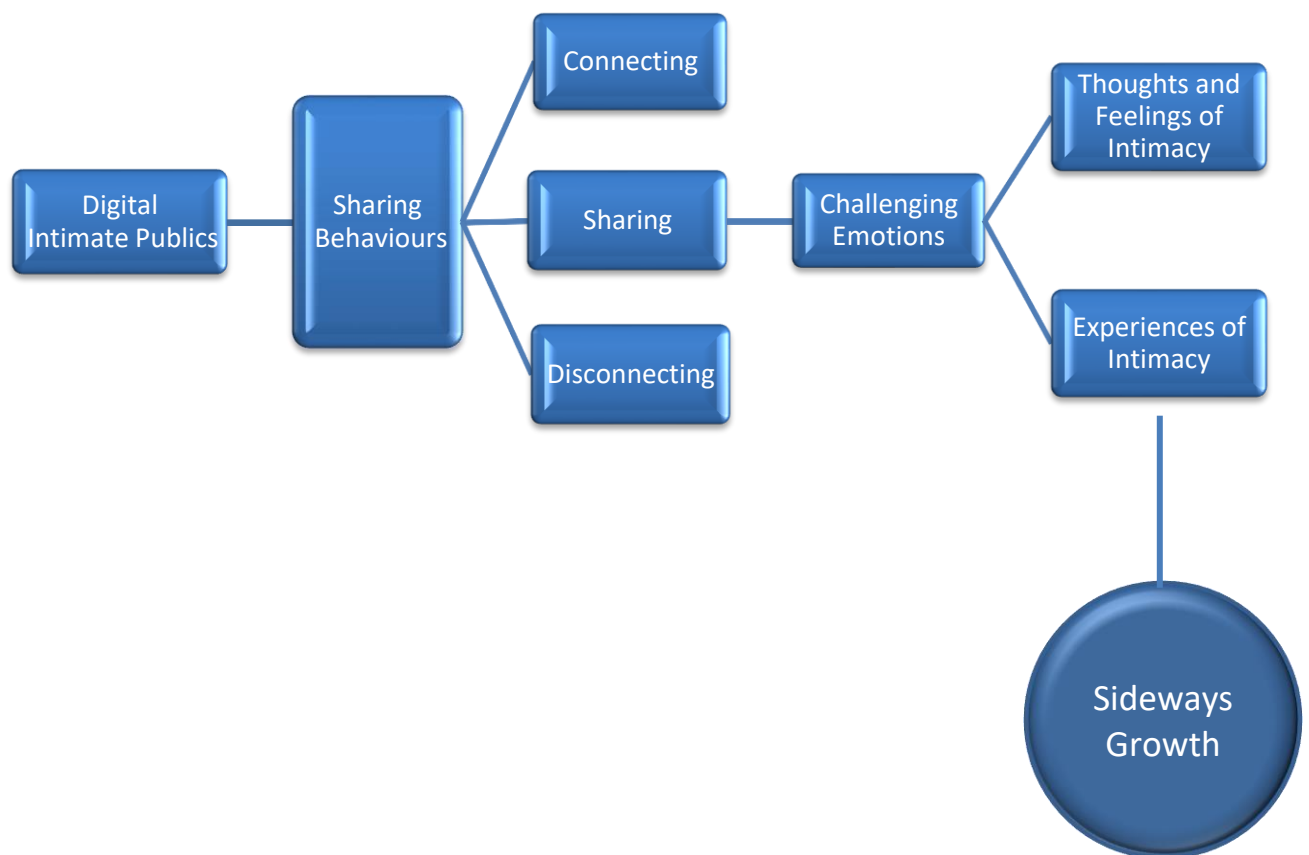


Figure 16. Key understandings revealed through analysis of d/artaphacts

Figure 16 illustrates the idea that the young people in this study explored intimacy in digital intimate publics where they engaged in sharing behaviours. These sharing behaviours included connecting, sharing and disconnecting from intimate explorations. These sharing behaviours produced challenging emotions that stuck to participants' experiences of intimacy (Ahmed, 2004a, 2010a). The sticky emotions produced through sharing practices moved between the participants, their partners and the wider world, to produce experiences of intimacy and to facilitate moments of sideways growth (Stockton, 2009).

9.3.1 Implications. The understandings generated through this study are timely reminders that educators need to work with the reality of young people's lived experiences of intimacy. Although numerous scholars of sexuality and relationship education have

acknowledged this in theory (Ollis et al., 2019; Quinlivan, 2018a), working with young people's intimate and digital lives remains difficult because policy and moral panics drive negative perceptions of young people's ability to navigate their intimate lives for themselves (Fyfe, 2019; Leahy, 2014). The risk and harm discourse that underpin much sexuality and relationship curricula continue to frame young people as vulnerable and at risk of intimate, sexual and or digital harm (Dobson, 2018; Leahy, 2014; Ollis, 2016). Although these voices dominate much public discourse, a recent newspaper article exploring the state of sexuality education in Victoria, Australia, suggested that new discourses about the intimate lives of young people, and the way educators are working with young people are emerging (Fyfe, 2019).

In her recent media article, Fyfe (2019) argued that a “creeping conservatism [...] has narrowed what many parents and principals are comfortable with” (p. 52) in terms of sexuality education in schools. She made this argument to highlight the way external forces continue to narrow the content of sexuality and relationship education provided in schools. Fyfe's (2019) comprehensive analysis of the current state of sexuality education in Victoria, documents many of the reasons why wider political discourse about the intimate and digital lives of young people have become more alarmist in the wake of the “safe schools scandal” (Law, 2017) and the easy accessibility of online pornography. However, new ways of engaging young people in discussions about intimacy and sexuality are emerging through conversations generated by Fyfe's (2019) newspaper article and a popular pay TV series, “Sex Education” (Nunn, 2019, 2020) which was streamed by over a million viewers in its first few months. This emerging public discourse, when combined with the voices of scholars working with young people in schools (Ollis et al., 2019; Quinlivan, 2018a; Renold, 2018), offer alternative ways of thinking and working with young people's everyday intimate experiences. Furthermore, embracing digital devices and working with creative learning practices offers educators, parents and young people alike opportunities to examine and discuss intimacy in an autonomous and self-directed manner.

Through the practice of trialling the creative filmmaking method in this study, I have demonstrated that, when given time and space to reflect on their lived experiences, 10 young people aged 11-14 enthusiastically examined their experiences of intimacy within an educational context. Therefore, the research process has demonstrated that creative filmmaking could offer young people a powerful independent learning opportunity to discuss and explore aspects of their intimate and digital lives they may have never discussed before. Nine of the 10 participants indicated in their video elicitation interviews that they felt better about their intimate experiences after engaging in the creative filmmaking method because they learned about intimacy from talking to each other. Through these conversations, they began to understand that the uncomfortable, challenging or confronting emotions that emerged during their experiences of intimacy were emotions shared by their peers. This finding has applicability for how schools, as sites of “in person” sharing, and intimacy, could support young people to share, discuss, analyse, re-appraise, re-imagine, and further develop skills and knowledge to direct and or re-direct their intimate lives.

A self-generated and creative filmmaking method that engages young people in education about intimacy, shifts the role of adults from providers of knowledge to facilitators of learning. Facilitators of learning might frame the learning process to enable young people to engage in the “self-work” that Byron and Albury (2018, p. 227) argued is necessary for young people to create their own ethical intimate practices. This kind of learning process might also support young people to engage in forms of education about sexuality and intimacy centred on thinking rather than compliance (Gilbert, 2014). Gilbert (2014) calls for a kind of sex education where thinking develops “the capacity to think about one’s own thoughts” (p. 66). In self-directed creative learning processes educators could support the thinking required to undertake “self-work” (Byron & Albury, 2018, p. 227) by engaging in “theories of learning in sex education beyond compliance” (Gilbert, 2014, p. 66), and by creating time and space for young people to explore

their intimate lives in their own way. A form of intimacy education that offers time, space and a theoretical framing that acknowledges young people as experts in their own lives, could provide a learning opportunity that supported young people to explore the challenging emotions associated with intimacy that often facilitate forms of strange, unexpected or uncomfortable sideways growth (Stockton, 2009).

Data produced in this study demonstrate that self-generated creative filmmaking can support young people to develop the skills they need to recall, consider and express emotions that have attached themselves to their intimate experiences. Through the process of engaging and exploring their intimate experiences, the participants demonstrated that they could reframe the sticky emotions attached to a range of “bad feelings” (Ahmed 2010a p.30) connected to their experiences of intimacy. Comments Sophia made in her video elicitation interview when responding to my final question, “is there anything else you might like to say”, illustrate this point. Her response, “um this was a good experiment; I actually liked it a lot. Cause I can like express my feelings and sort everything out” (Sophia VEI, 2016), indicated that the grip the emotions of confusion, upset and disappointment once had on Sophia was reduced through her engagement in the creative filmmaking process. At the same time, this understanding demonstrated that the experience of having these challenging emotions afforded her an opportunity to engage in self-directed learning through sideways growth (Stockton, 2009).

9.3.2 Recommendations for future research. In this section, I offer a brief explanation of eight ideas that future researchers could explore to expand the fields of study relating to digital intimacy, young people and experiences of intimacy. Firstly, the understanding that participants explored and expressed emotions in digital environments in ways they did not “in person”, highlights the need for future research in this area. Research is needed to further understand the emotional affordances of digital intimate public spaces and their role in supporting young people as they explore intimacy. Secondly, a study focusing on trust, and how the establishment of trust

occurs for young people could enhance understandings of how to support young people as they engage in sideways growth through intimate digital practices. A third opportunity for future research was illuminated by the way the three young men in this study were open to exploring emotion and intimacy in digital environments in ways that they could not or would not in person through FTF contact. Therefore, research exploring how young people use digital locations to share and develop emotional capacity and trust could offer further understanding of the emotional and intimate lives of young people under the age of 15 (Dobson, Carah, et al., 2018).

A fourth recommendation highlights the need for further exploration of the rich and complex emotional and intimate lives of young men. To better understand the way young men, explore, experience and understand intimacy, a study focusing on the intimate lives of a larger sample of young men aged 11-14 is necessary. A fifth recommendation highlights that research framed through an after queer lens could offer scholars from sociology, education or digital intimacies ways of exploring the intimate lives of young men outside the normative framing of “hard masculinity” (Naezer & Ringrose, 2019). An after queer approach could provide the theoretical framing needed to see young men’s capacity to engage in the “emotional work” (Holford, 2019, p. 73) necessary to establish intimacy. A sixth recommendation points to the need for research focusing on the emerging ways that young men are exploring and expressing new and non-normative forms of intimacy across a range of digital environments (Cover, 2018, 2019).

A seventh recommendation points to the opportunity to explore the positive way young people use the practice of lurking on SMP and SNS to establish the suitability of an intimate connections. An exploration of young people’s adaptation and strategic use of the practice of lurking could offer further researchers a way to explore how young people queer adult practices as they explore various forms of digital intimacy. Finally, a study exploring the important role of the school health nurses who deliver much intimate and sexual education in schools is urgently needed. A study focusing on the many ways school health nurses work with young people to

understand human intimacy could offer important insights into their significant contribution to the delivery of intimate, sexual and relationship education in Victoria. Some of these recommendations were identified through an analysis of the limitations of this research. In the next section I briefly discuss these limitations.

9.3.3 Limitations. I have identified four limitations that expand upon the methodological limitations discussed in Chapter 4, Section 4.8. The first two limitations relate to the research design. The first limitation recognised was my lack of clarity about the method of data analysis. More understanding of diffractive analysis at an earlier point in the research design process would have provided a level of certainty, expedient analysis and discussion phase. In particular, my journey with diffractive analysis and my turn to thematic analysis was time consuming and damaging to my confidence as a qualitative researcher. However, thinking sideways about this experience, I now understand that the process of engaging in diffractive analysis and then a thematic analysis, actually offered me an opportunity to understand the data more deeply. On a personal note, the experience of struggling, failing and then finding my way through an extended analysis process also helped me to learn many things about myself, and to emerge from the process a more confident and independent researcher.

The second limitation relates to the access to tools at the research site. In my research planning, I assumed that each year level class that I worked with would have a set of digital devices to use. However, at the research site this was not the case. Therefore, in future research that requires participants to use digital devices as data production tools, I recommend establishing the availability of digital devices before the commencement of the fieldwork phase. A more thorough scoping of the digital devices available to students would benefit future researchers using creative filmmaking on every day digital devices as a data production method.

A third limitation is that all participants self-identified as cis gendered males or females. Therefore, the participants presented experiences from a gendered binary of male/female

perspective. Consequently, findings from this research must be understood from this narrow view of gender. Furthermore, the forms of intimacy discussed offer understandings of intimacy from the perspective of heterosexual encounters, with the exclusion of Jackson's experience with the "paedophiles". This limitation points to the opportunities for future researchers to actively recruit participants who self-identify as belonging to the LGBTIQ+ community.

Finally, due to my decision to focus the discussions in this thesis on the data from student participants' short films in order to address the two primary research questions in detail, I did not analyse, discuss or draw conclusions from the important ideas and observations of the school health nurse. As discussed in Section 9.3.2, Recommendations, a thorough understanding of the important role that school based health nurses play in the intimate and sexual health education of young people under 15 years is desperately needed. In the next and final section of this thesis, I offer several concluding thoughts and my final reflections on the research process.

9.4 Conclusion

Since I began this study, the field of sexuality research has expanded to include discussions of intimacy (Byron & Albury, 2018; Naezer & Ringrose, 2019). One of the ways this expansion has materialised is through the work of Dobson, Robards, et al. (2018) and the many scholars who contributed to their recent publication, *Digital Intimate Publics and Social Media*. From reading the ideas of digital intimacy scholars, I began to understand how digital intimate publics offered marginalised people, including young people queered by innocence (Stockton, 2009) opportunities to explore and develop emotions and intimacy in ways not possible in FTF encounters. The work of these scholars offered multiple opportunities to understand how the concept of digital intimate publics (Dobson et al. 2018a) might be used to think about digital intimate experiences across a range of research foci. The work of these scholars also illustrated and connected the affordances of SMP, SNS and IMS with Berlant's (2008) conceptualisation of intimacy as both a public and private expression of sharing.

Finally, as an educator, I am encouraged by recent researchers working with young people to explore new forms of creative and student generated sexuality education. The recent work of Ollis et al. (2019), Enright et al. (2017), Iverson and Renold (2016), and Renold (2018) demonstrated the many ways that creative methods and arts-based approaches can support young people to explore their intimate lives with agency and creative freedom. The work of these scholars and the exciting theorising of queer inspired scholars of sexuality such as Quinlivan (2018d) and Allen (2018b) offer hope for new and evolving forms of intimacy and sexuality education. The recent thinking from these scholars', highlights young peoples' capacity to explore, think for themselves and learn from their everyday lived experiences of intimacy, by engaging in self-directed and creative learning processes undertaken in school environments.

9.4.1 Final reflections. I conducted this research across a period of my life when my four children were attending primary and secondary school. During this time, I shared my ideas with them, I asked them questions, I regularly checked and clarified my understandings, and asked their opinion about the digital sites and digital intimate practices I was discovering through my participants' stories. In essence, over five years we talked about many things around the dinner table and I feel very lucky that I had an inhouse sounding board for my ideas. The process of being involved in this research while three of them emerged from the years between 11-14, was enormously beneficial and gave me the capacity to parent them as agentic intimate and sexual subjects. However, throughout these years, the strain of working, raising a family and being an apprentice researcher was at times overwhelming. In spite of the struggles and the emotional strain of writing this thesis, I am grateful for the opportunity I have had to learn more about intimacy through the process of exploring the intimate lives of 10 brave young people. I am also grateful that I have had the luxury of engaging in numerous personal and intellectual challenges that facilitated sideways, backwards and queer forms of growth. Finally, it is my sincere hope that the data, discussions and conclusions presented in this thesis will contribute

new and valuable understandings that enhance scholarly discourse about the under explored intimate lives of young people aged 11-14.

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Appendices

Appendix A Ethics Approvals



MONASH University

Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Research Office

Human Ethics Certificate of Approval

This is to certify that the project below was considered by the Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee. The Committee was satisfied that the proposal meets the requirements of the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research* and has granted approval.

Project Number: CF15/3380 - 2015001441

Project Title: Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?

Chief Investigator: Dr Mary Lou Rasmussen

Approved: **From:** 11 November 2015 **To:** 11 November 2020

Terms of approval - Failure to comply with the terms below is in breach of your approval and the Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research.

1. The Chief investigator is responsible for ensuring that permission letters are obtained, if relevant, before any data collection can occur at the specified organisation.
2. Approval is only valid whilst you hold a position at Monash University.
3. It is the responsibility of the Chief Investigator to ensure that all investigators are aware of the terms of approval and to ensure the project is conducted as approved by MUHREC.
4. You should notify MUHREC immediately of any serious or unexpected adverse effects on participants or unforeseen events affecting the ethical acceptability of the project.
5. The Explanatory Statement must be on Monash University letterhead and the Monash University complaints clause must include your project number.
6. **Amendments to the approved project (including changes in personnel):** Require the submission of a Request for Amendment form to MUHREC and must not begin without written approval from MUHREC. Substantial variations may require a new application.
7. **Future correspondence:** Please quote the project number and project title above in any further correspondence.
8. **Annual reports:** Continued approval of this project is dependent on the submission of an Annual Report. This is determined by the date of your letter of approval.
9. **Final report:** A Final Report should be provided at the conclusion of the project. MUHREC should be notified if the project is discontinued before the expected date of completion.
10. **Monitoring:** Projects may be subject to an audit or any other form of monitoring by MUHREC at any time.
11. **Retention and storage of data:** The Chief Investigator is responsible for the storage and retention of original data pertaining to a project for a minimum period of five years.

Professor Nip Thomson
Chair, MUHREC

cc: Dr Deana Leahy, Ms Linette Etheredge,

Human Ethics Office
Monash University
Room 111, Chancellery Building E
24 Sports Walk, Clayton Campus, Wellington Rd, Clayton VIC 3800, Australia
Telephone +61 3 9905 5490 Facsimile +61 3 9905 3831
Email muhrec@monash.edu <http://intranet.monash.edu.au/researchadmin/human/index.php>
ABN 12 377 614 012 CRICOS Provider #00008C



Department of
Education & Training

Strategy & Review Group

2 Treasury Place
East Melbourne Victoria 3002
Telephone: 03 9637 2000
DX210083

2015_002927

Ms Linette Etheredge
Faculty of Education
Monash University
Level 4, Building 6
Wellington Road
CLAYTON 3800

Dear Ms Etheredge

Thank you for your application of 25 November 2015 in which you request permission to conduct research in Victorian government schools titled *Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?*

I am pleased to advise that on the basis of the information you have provided your research proposal is approved in principle subject to the conditions detailed below.

1. The research is conducted in accordance with the final documentation you provided to the Department of Education and Training.
2. Separate approval for the research needs to be sought from school principals. This is to be supported by the Department of Education and Training approved documentation and, if applicable, the letter of approval from a relevant and formally constituted Human Research Ethics Committee.
3. The project is commenced within 12 months of this approval letter and any extensions or variations to your study, including those requested by an ethics committee must be submitted to the Department of Education and Training for its consideration before you proceed.
4. As a matter of courtesy, you advise the relevant Regional Director of the schools or governing body of the early childhood settings that you intend to approach. An outline of your research and a copy of this letter should be provided to the Regional Director or governing body.
5. You acknowledge the support of the Department of Education Training in any publications arising from the research.
6. The Research Agreement conditions, which include the reporting requirements at the conclusion of your study, are upheld. A reminder will be sent for reports not submitted by the study's indicative completion date.

Your details will be dealt with in accordance with the *Public Records Act 1973* and the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014*. Should you have any queries or wish to gain access to your personal information held by this department please contact our Privacy Officer at the above address.



I wish you well with your research. Should you have further questions on this matter, please contact [REDACTED] Project Support Officer, Insights and Evidence Branch, by telephone on (03) 9637 2707 or by email at [REDACTED]@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Joyce Cleary
Director
Insights and Evidence

8/02/2016

Appendix B Letter to Principal at Research site



MONASH University

Proposed letter to Principal

Project: CF15/3380-2015001441: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Chief Investigator

Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen
Department of Education
Phone: 03 99052181
email: marylou.rasmussen@monash.edu

PhD candidate researcher

Linette Etheredge
Phone : 03 9905 9239
email:
linette.etheredge@monash.edu

Dear [REDACTED]

After much discussion and consultation over the past year I hereby formally request permission to work with [REDACTED] College staff and students to undertake research that relates to the AusVELS General Capabilities; Personal and Social Capability and that builds capacity in the area of Respectful Relationships Education. We would like to invite 2 staff members, the DET nurse and 30 students in years 7 & 8 at your school to take part in a research study.

The research has obtained ethics approval from both Monash University Ethics Committee (MUHREC) and The Victorian Department of Education and Training ((DET) Approval number: 2015_002927).

What does the research involve?

The Aims of the research are to:

- Understand more about young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand more about the way digital spaces might impact young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand if active filmmaking can help young people to think and talk about intimacy in school classes.
- Collect short films that show and tell what young people aged 11-14 think about intimacy and relationships.

As a research participant students will be asked to:

- Work in their regular health education class on a unit where they will discuss relationships and ideas around intimacy. This conversation may include talking about intimate relationships seen in digital spaces.
- Participating students will self-select a partner who is also participating in the study to discuss, design, develop and produce a short film. They will make a short film using their own iPhone, laptop or iPad and iMovie. The film will express what individual students think about the way intimacy is portrayed, discussed or constructed in digital spaces. Participants will share a copy of the film with the researcher.

- When the film is finished participants will talk about the process in a short videoed interview with the researcher.
- During this time the researcher will observe and take notes about the process, reactions and comments.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing consent.

All participating students and their parents will be given a document that explains the research and individual consent forms to sign. Once both parents and students have signed the forms either party can withdraw consent during the process or before the data is processed or published.

Possible benefits and risks to participants include:

Participating students will undertake student-led activities that open up ideas and discussions around intimacy and relationships.

The potential benefits to students through participating in the research are:

- Participating students will learn about filmmaking using digital devices and iMovie.
- Participants will discuss and critically consider ideas around intimacy and respectful relationships.
- Participants will understand how filmmaking can be used to promote active, creative and collaborative learning.

The potential risks to students through participating in the research are:

- Participating students may feel confusion, uncertainty, discomfort or embarrassment talking about intimacy. However, these risks are no greater than any discomfort students might feel during the usual health class.
- Participants may want to talk about something that comes up for them during or after the lessons. They can talk to school student support or call a free 24/7 service Life line: 13 11 41 or Kids Help line: 1800 55 1800.
- Participants and their parents have been informed that if a student makes a disclosure during the research process that must be reported to authorities, all usual protocols regarding mandatory reporting will be strictly adhered to.

Confidentiality

Participating students will create and own their own film and therefore confidentiality or anonymity can't be offered by the researcher. Participants are the owner of the film and in consenting to participate they gift use of the film and the research data to the researcher across all media for all time. The details of the school will however be de-identified in all publications.

Storage of data

A copy of participating student's films will be stored in a password protected web based video streaming site like You Tube or Vimeo and on a portable hard drive. The field notes and final interview will be stored on a portable hard drive for the period of time needed to conduct analysis and write publications before they are deleted.

Results and use of data

Data collected and results or understandings made during this research may be used in a range of publications. These may include but are not limited to: PhD thesis, journals, books, and conference papers, on and off line media, public spaces, video channels and teaching or professional development material.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research project No; CF/3380-2015001441, you can contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Email: muhrec@monash.edu Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Thank you for reading this information about the research project that will be conducted at your school.



Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen

Appendix C Risk Assessment



Risk Assessment

Project: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Unit / Project:	Education	Supervisor:	Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen PhD student investigator: Linette Etheredge
Location:	Offsite	Date/s	
Purpose	Research PhD		

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating			Priority	Management
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood		
Describe the risk event, causes and consequences. For example, 'Something occurs ... caused by ... leading to ...'	Describe any existing policy, procedure, practice or device that acts to minimise a particular risk				If control effectiveness is poor or unknown provide further management	For those risks requiring management in addition to the existing controls. List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will be done? Who is accountable? When will it happen?
There is a possible risk of momentary confusion, uncertainty or discomfort when the initial topic of intimacy is introduced to the student group by the school based health nurse who will co facilitate the classroom program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> However this risk is no greater than any risk of discomfort that a student may experience in the normal course of their usual health education program. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Unlikely	Medium	If student displays ongoing confusion, uncertainty or discomfort the school nurse or participating researcher will approach student and offer assistance to clarify, explain or workout an appropriate alternative.
There is possibility that students may perceive risk of embarrassment or loss of face discussing the topic of intimacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This has been considered and processes for preventing potential embarrassment or loss of face include: 1) students self-select partner to work with across working, sharing and creating visual artefact 2) students self- 	Satisfactory	Minor	Unlikely	Medium	If student displays ongoing embarrassment, loss of face or discomfort the school nurse or participating researcher will approach student and offer assistance. This student led process ensures that student agency and decision making is driving what students feel comfortable to discuss, disclose and or record.

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating			Priority	Management
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood		
Describe the risk event, causes and consequences. For example, <i>Something occurs ... caused by ... leading to ...</i>	Describe any existing policy, procedure, practice or device that acts to minimise a particular risk				If control effectiveness is poor or unknown provide further management	For those risks requiring management in addition to the existing controls. List <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will be done? Who is accountable? When will it happen?
	select questions around intimacy to be considered, ideas to be explored, filmed and shared.3) students self-select if they wish to share their completed visual data with the wider group or only with the researcher.					
There is also a risk that the school based health nurse or the researcher may feel some discomfort at a given comment or response offered by a student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Given the experience of both the school based health nurse and the researcher with this subject matter it is a remote risk. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Rare	Medium	If either school based nurse or participating research require a debriefing during or after the teaching process this will be undertaken. The researcher will ensure that debriefing occurs after each teaching session. Suggested modifications to avoid said discomfort will be noted and enacted upon in the next teaching session.
As is the case in any school health education class there is the remote risk that a student will make a disclosure to staff that by law must be reported to authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All usual protocols regarding mandatory reporting issues will be strictly adhered to. The researcher is fully briefed on the current DHS policy and procedure for mandatory reporting should a disclosure arise in the classroom. DHS online policy document dated 12 November 2012. http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/cpmanual/intake/overview-of-intake-of-reports-under-the-children-youth-and-families-act/1122-mandatory-and-other-required-reporting 	Satisfactory	Major	Unlikely	Medium	All usual protocols regarding mandatory reporting issues will be strictly adhered to.

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating			Priority	Management
		Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood		
Describe the risk event, causes and consequences. For example, <i>Something occurs ... caused by ... leading to ...</i>	Describe any existing policy, procedure, practice or device that acts to minimise a particular risk				If control effectiveness is poor or unknown provide further management	For those risks requiring management in addition to the existing controls. List: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What will be done? Who is accountable? When will it happen?
Participants may feel some discomfort of a personal nature that is not disclosed in the classroom program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bearing this in mind, at the commencement of each of the teaching and learning sessions all students will be reminded that student support services at the school (school counselling staff) will be available to all students, staff and the researcher should they wish to discuss any issues that has arisen during the session. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Unlikely	Medium	If additional assistance is required students may seek the support of the school counselling staff or the services of public 24/7 phone or online support.
There is a risk that there may be some disagreement amongst the students themselves (and their legal representatives) about who is going to control the recording, since it is possible that the person filming may want to widely distribute it but the persons being filmed may not.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This important issue will be discussed before the process commences, working pairs are selected and therefore any filming or video interviewing and storytelling occurs. Agreements will need to be made between eventual working pairs regarding if, how or where any visual artefacts are shared with others. This issue will be minimised by the majority of participants making their own films using their own devices either iPhones, iPads or laptops. 	Satisfactory	Minor	Unlikely	Medium	If this situation arises students involved in the dispute will be offered assistance and or mediation to work out their differences. If this is not successful they will be given an opportunity to work alone. If this is not an acceptable alternative they may be able to join another group of students who hold a similar view of how the eventual visual artefacts should or should not be distributed.

Risk Description	Existing Controls	Rating			Priority	Management
Describe the risk event, causes and consequences. For example, <i>Something occurs ... caused by ... leading to ...</i>	Describe any existing policy, procedure, practice or device that acts to minimise a particular risk	Effectiveness of existing controls	Risk Consequences	Risk Likelihood	If control effectiveness is poor or unknown provide further management	For those risks requiring management in addition to the existing controls. List: • What will be done? • Who is accountable? • When will it happen?
Unexpected emergency at School premise (eg. Fire, evacuation, threat on grounds, other disasters)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be aware of local School Emergency Procedures 	Satisfactory	Major	Rare	High	Remain calm and follow instructions of supervisors and host staff If serious injury occurs immediately Call Emergency Services – 000 Where appropriate take notes of incident and contact supervisor / safety officer when possible

This risk assessment was conducted by Linette Etheredge on _____

I acknowledge the content of this risk assessment and have taken these risks and controls into account.

Supervisor _____ Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen

Student/s _____ PhD student Linette Etheredge

Risk Treatment Priority Table

Use the table below to decide the overall risk rating and represent the priority of the each risk for treatment.

Consequences	Major	High	High	Extreme	Extreme
	Moderate	Medium	Medium	High	Extreme
	Minor	Low	Medium	High	High
	Insignificant	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
		Rare	Unlikely	Likely	Almost certain
Likelihood					

Appendix D Explanatory Statements



MONASH University

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Parent/s or legal guardian of student participant

Project: CF15/3380-2015001441: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Chief Investigator

Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen
Faculty of Education
Phone: 03 99052181
email: marylou.rasmussen@monash.edu

PhD candidate researcher

Linette Etheredge
Phone: 03 9905 9239
email: linette.etheredge@monash.edu

Your child is invited to take part in a research study. The school Principal has approved this study. Please read the information below before deciding if you want your child to be involved. If you'd like more details please contact the researchers on the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?**The Aims of the research are to:**

- Understand more about young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand more about the way digital spaces might impact young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand if active filmmaking can help young people to think and talk about intimacy in school classes.
- Collect short films that show and tell what young people aged 11-14 think about intimacy and relationships.

As a research participant your child will be asked to:

- Work in their regular health education class on a unit to discuss relationships and ideas around intimacy. This conversation may include talking about intimate relationships experienced in digital spaces.
- Your child will self-select a partner and discuss, design, develop and produce a short film. Your child will make a short film using their own iPhone, laptop or iPad and iMovie. The film will express what your child thinks about the way intimacy is portrayed, discussed or constructed in digital spaces. Your child will share a copy of the film with the researcher in which they may choose to be identifiable. However, they must not include footage of peers who are not participating in the research or of any image of the school which identifies it.
- When the film is finished your child will talk about the process in a short videoed interview.
- During this time the researcher will observe and take notes about the process and student comments.

Why has your child been chosen for this research?

The researcher wants to understand how young people aged 11-14 learn about ideas around intimate relationships through digital spaces. Your child is in this age range and your school is interested.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing consent.

You and your child need to read the documents that explain the research before you both sign the consent forms. Once you've signed the forms you or your child can withdraw consent any time before the data is processed or published. Please return the signed consent forms to the collection box located in the school reception area.

Possible benefits and risks to participants include:

Your child will undertake student-led activities that open up ideas and discussions around intimacy and relationships.

The potential benefits to your child through participating in the research are:

- Your child will learn about filmmaking using digital devices and iMovie.
- Your child will discuss and critically consider ideas around intimacy and respectful relationships.
- Your child will understand how filmmaking can be used to promote active, creative and collaborative learning.

The potential risks to your child through participating in the research are:

- Your child may feel confusion, uncertainty, discomfort or embarrassment talking about intimacy. However, these risks are no greater than any discomfort your child might feel during their usual health class.
- Your child may want to talk about something that comes up for them during or after the lessons. They can talk to school student support or call a free 24/7 service Life line: 13 11 41 or Kids Help line: 1800 55 1800.
- It's really important you understand if your child makes a disclosure during the research process that must be reported to authorities, all usual protocols regarding mandatory reporting will be strictly adhered to.

Confidentiality

Your child will create and own their own film and therefore, confidentiality or anonymity can't be offered to your child by the researcher. Your child is the owner of the film and in consenting to participate you and your child gift use of the film and the research data to the researcher across all media for all time. The details of your child's school will however be de-identified in all publications.

Storage of data

A copy of your child's film will be stored in a password protected web based video streaming site like Vimeo and on a portable hard drive. The field notes and final interview will be stored on a portable hard drive for the period of time needed to conduct analysis and write publications before they are deleted.

Results and use of data

Data collected and results or understandings made during this research may be used in a range of publications. These may include but are not limited to: PhD thesis, journals, books, and conference papers, on and off line media, public spaces, video channels and teaching or professional development material.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research study No: CF15/3380-2015001441 you can contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Email: muhrec@monash.edu Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Thank you for reading this information and for taking the time to consider allowing your child to participate in this research project



Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

DET school health nurse participant

Project: CF15/3380-2015001441: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Chief Investigator

Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen
Faculty of Education
Phone: 03 99052181
email: marylou.rasmussen@monash.edu

PhD Student

Linette Etheredge
Phone : 03 9905 9239
email: linette.etheredge@monash.edu

You have invited to take part in a research study. The school Principal has approved this study. Please read the information below before deciding if you want to be involved. If you'd like more details please contact the researchers on the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?

The Aims of the research are to:

- Understand more about young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand more about the way digital spaces might impact young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand if active filmmaking can help young people to think and talk about intimacy in school classes.

As a research participant you will be asked to:

- Conduct health education classes with the participant researcher during which students will discuss relationships and ideas around intimacy and then engage in student-led filmmaking. These conversations may include talking about intimate relationships experienced in digital spaces.
- Discuss the filmmaking learning process once it is finished in a short videoed interview.
- During this time the researcher will observe, take notes and chat to you about the process, reactions, comments and your interactions with students participating in the research process. The researcher will document these observations in written and or video format.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing consent.

You need to read this document explaining the research before you sign the consent form. Once you've signed the form you can withdraw consent during the research process. However, it's not possible to withdraw participation after the research is finished.

Possible benefits and risks to participants include:

You will facilitate in the student-led activities that open up ideas and discussions around intimacy and relationships using filmmaking techniques on iMovie.

The potential benefits to you through participating in the research are:

- You will learn about filmmaking using digital devices and iMovie.
- You will learn about a student-led pedagogical practice.
- You will develop understandings around the ways filmmaking can be used to promote active, creative and collaborative learning in a health education classroom context.

The potential risks to you through participating in the research are:

- You may feel confusion, uncertainty, discomfort or embarrassment talking about intimacy with students. However, these risks are no greater than any discomfort you might feel during the usual health class.
- You may want to talk about something that comes up for you during or after the lessons. You can talk to school support, DET support officers or call a free 24/7 service such as Life line: 13 11 41.
- It's really important you understand that if any child makes a disclosure during the research process that must be reported to authorities, all usual protocols regarding mandatory reporting will be strictly adhered to.

Confidentiality

The details of your comments and the school's identity will be de-identified in all publications.

Storage of data

The field notes and final interview will be stored on a portable hard drive for the period of time needed to conduct analysis and write publications before they are deleted.

Results and use of data

Data collected and results or understandings made during this research may be used in a range of publications. These may include but are not limited to: PhD thesis, journals, books, and conference papers, on and off line media, public spaces, video channels and teaching or professional development material.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research project No: CF15/3380-2015001441, you can contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Email: muhrec@monash.edu Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Thank you for reading this information and for taking the time to consider participating in this research project.



Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen



EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

Student participants

Project: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Chief Investigator

Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen
Department of Education
Phone: 03 99052181
email: marylou.rasmussen@monash.edu

PhD Student

Linette Etheredge
Phone : 03 9905 9239
email: linette.etheredge@monash.edu

You are invited to take part in a research study. Your school Principal has approved this study. Please read the information below before deciding if you want to be involved. If you'd like more details please contact the researchers on the phone numbers or email addresses listed above.

What does the research involve?

The Aims of the research are to:

- Understand more about young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand more about the way digital spaces might impact young people's ideas around intimacy.
- Understand if active filmmaking can help young people to think and talk about intimacy in school classes.
- Collect short films that show and tell what young people aged 11-14 think about intimacy and relationships.

As a research participant you will be asked to:

- Work in your regular health education class to discuss relationships and ideas around intimacy. This conversation may include talking about the intimate relationships you experience in digital spaces.
- You will self-select a partner and discuss, design, develop and produce a short film. You will make the film using your own iPhone, laptop or iPad and iMovie. The film will express what you think about the way intimacy is portrayed, discussed or constructed in digital spaces. You will share a copy of the film with the researcher. You may chose to be identifiable in your own film but you must not include footage of non participant peers or your school in any way that they will be identifiable.
- When the film is finished you will talk about the process in a short videoed interview with the researcher.
- During this time the researcher will observe and take notes about the process, your reactions and comments.

Why you were chosen for this research.

The researcher wants to understand how young people aged 11-14 learn about ideas around intimate relationships through digital spaces. You are in this age range and your school is interested in the research.

Consenting to participate in the project and withdrawing consent.

You and your parents need to read the documents that explain the research before you both sign the consent forms. Once you've signed the form you can withdraw your consent during the process or before your film is shared. You can also withdraw your participation or your film after the final film is produced for up to three months. This would mean that your film could be deleted from the video streaming site.

Possible benefits and risks to participants include:

You will undertake student-led activities that open up ideas and discussions around intimacy and relationships.

The potential benefits of participating in the research are:

- You will learn about filmmaking using digital devices and iMovie.
- You will discuss and critically consider ideas around intimacy and respectful relationships.
- You will understand the way filmmaking can be used to promote active, creative and collaborative learning.

The potential risks of participating in the research are:

- You may feel confusion, uncertainty, discomfort or embarrassment talking about intimacy. However, these risks are no greater than any discomfort you might feel during your usual health class.
- You may want to talk about something that comes up during or after the lessons. At any time you can talk to student support at school or call a free 24/7 service like Lifeline: 13 11 41 or Kids Help line: 1800 55 1800.
- It's really important you understand if you make a disclosure during the research process that must be reported to authorities, all usual protocols regarding mandatory reporting will be strictly adhered to.

Confidentiality

Because you have created and own your own film confidentiality or anonymity can't be offered to you. You are the owner of the film and in agreeing to participate you gift use of the film and the research data collected to the researcher across all media for all time. Your school details however will be de-identified in all publications.

Storage of data

A copy of your film will be stored in a password protected web based video streaming site like You Tube or Vimeo and a portable hard drive. The field notes and final interview will be stored on a portable hard drive for the period of time needed to conduct analysis and write publications before they are deleted.

Results and use of data

Data collected and results or understandings made during this research may be used in a range of publications. These may include but are not limited to: PhD thesis, journals, books, conference papers, on and off line media, public spaces, video channels and teaching or professional development material.

Complaints

Should you have any concerns or complaints about the conduct of the research project, you can contact the Executive Officer, Monash University Human Research Ethics (MUHREC):

Executive Officer
Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee (MUHREC)
Room 111, Building 3e
Research Office
Monash University VIC 3800

Tel: +61 3 9905 2052 Email: muhrec@monash.edu Fax: +61 3 9905 3831

Thank you for reading this information and for taking the time to consider participating in this research project.



Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen

Appendix E Consent and Assent Forms



MONASH University

CONSENT FORM

Parent/s or legal guardian of participating students

Project: CF15/3380-2015001441: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen

PhD candidate investigator: Linette Etheredge

Your child has been asked to take part in the Monash University research study specified above.

This document is the formal consent form needed to enable your child to participate. In signing this form you undertake to: read and understand the Explanatory Statement attached to this form and then give consent to my child participating in this study.

Please tick each box below to show your consent.

I consent to my child:	Yes	No
Being observed as they undertake a unit of work in health education discussing intimacy and relationships in digital spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in the student-led filmmaking process facilitated by the school nurse and the participant researcher during which they will make their own short film.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing with the researcher the short film they have made during the research process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving the researcher ongoing permission to use the film and the data in her research, future publications, discussions and professional undertakings in online and offline spaces for all time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in a final filmed interview to discuss with the researcher the process and content of the student-led filmmaking activity undertaken in the health education classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To return this ticked and signed form to school and to put it in the collection box marked "Monash Research Study" which will be located in the school reception area.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of child participant _____

Parent or legal guardian of participant: Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or legal guardian of participant: Signature _____ Date _____



MONASH University

CONSENT FORM

Participating DET school health nurse

Project: CF15/2280-2015001441: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen

PhD student investigator: Linette Etheredge

I have been asked to take part in the Monash University research study specified above. I have read and understood the Explanatory Statement attached to this form and I hereby consent to participate in the study.

Please tick each box below to show your consent.

I consent to:	Yes	No
Being observed whilst co-facilitating with the participant researcher a unit of work in health education discussing intimacy and relationships in digital spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in a final filmed interview to discuss with the researcher the process and content of the student-led filmmaking activity undertaken in the health education classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving the researcher ongoing permission to use the data in her research, future publications, discussions and professional undertakings in online and offline spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
To return this ticked and signed form to the researcher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____



MONASH University

ASSENT FORM

Participating students

Project: 'Making meaning in a mediated marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?'

Chief Investigator: Associate Professor Mary Lou Rasmussen
PhD student investigator: Linette Etheredge

I have been asked to join in this Monash University study. The letter that explained everything about this study has been read to me and I have had a chance to ask questions about it. I understand what this research project is about and would like to join in.

I understand that being in this study is my choice and that I can change my mind and choose to not be part of this study any time before the research project is finished. I understand that if I need to I can ask the researcher to remove my film from the video streaming site for up to three months after the research is complete. I know that if I have any questions I can ask the school health nurse or the researcher at any time to answer them for me.

Please tick each box below to show your consent.

I agree to:	Yes	No
Being observed as I undertake a unit of work in health education discussing intimacy and relationships in digital spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in the student-led filmmaking process facilitated by the school nurse and the participant researcher.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not use any footage of peers who are not participating in the research where they can be identified or, any images of my school which identified it.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sharing with the researcher the short film I have made during the research process.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Participating in a final filmed interview to discuss with the researcher the process and content of the student-led film making activity I participated in during the unit of work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Giving the researcher ongoing permission to use my film and the data in her research, future publications, discussions and professional undertakings in online and offline spaces.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Name of Participant _____

Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix F Creative Filmmaking Method – Classroom activities

OUTLINE OF THE SCHOOL BASED PEDAGOGICAL PROCESS

The outline below is a summary document of the research and pedagogical process undertaken as part of a PhD study within a Victorian government secondary school. This document was distributed to leadership team members and teaching staff at the selected school who volunteered to allow the researcher to seek student participant from their classes. The document was distributed prior to selection of student participants and before the pedagogical process commenced. The document is attached to the thesis as an appendix for two reasons. Firstly, it documents the steps undertaken to seek ethical approval for the study and the intended steps in the pedagogical process once student participants were recruited. Secondly, the document outlines the intended connections to Victorian curriculum documents made at the commencement of the study.

Research Title:	"Making Meaning in a Mediated Marketplace: How do young people aged 11-14 interpret the intimate relationships they experience in digital spaces?"
Ethical Approvals:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monash University Human Research Ethics Committee • DET: Strategy and Review Group • Principal Mr.....
Official notification:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DET South Eastern Victoria Regional Office • DET Secondary School Nurse manager South East Region
Research Aims:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understand more about young people's ideas around intimacy.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Understand more about the way digital spaces might influence young people's ideas around intimacy. ➤ Understand if active filmmaking can help young people to think and talk about intimacy in school classes. ➤ Collect short films that show and tell what young people aged 11-14 think about intimacy and relationships (Intimacy may be understood as: 1. Emotional intimacy – sharing self, feelings, hopes, dreams, 2. Intellectual intimacy – sharing and discussing thoughts, ideas, interests 3. Social and recreational intimacy – sharing meals, activities, sports 4. Sexual intimacy – sharing desires and physical relations). 	
<p>Project summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Students will work in their regular health education class on a unit to discuss relationships and ideas around intimacy. This conversation may include talking about intimate relationships experienced in digital spaces. ➤ Students will self-select a partner and discuss, design, develop and produce a short film using their own iPhone, laptop or iPad and iMovie. The film will express what the participating student thinks about the way intimacy is portrayed, discussed, or constructed in digital spaces. ➤ Participating students will share a copy of the film with the researcher in which they may choose to be identifiable. However, they must not include footage of peers who are not participating in the research or any image of the school that identifies it. ➤ When the film is finished participating students will talk about the process in a short videoed interview. ➤ During this time, the researcher will observe participating students, the DET teaching staff and the DET Secondary school nurse taking notes about their reactions, comments, behaviours or ideas. ➤ The researcher wants to understand how young people aged 11-14 learn about ideas around intimate relationships through digital spaces. 	
<p>Desired participants</p> <p>Group 1 Students year 7</p> <p>Group 2 Students year 8</p> <p>1 X DET Secondary School Health Nurse</p>	
<p>Timing:</p>	
Term 1, 2016	Term 2, 2016

<p>Student information sessions</p> <p>Consent forms distributed</p> <p>Observation days (4 minimum)</p> <p>Participating staff & students</p>	<p>Weeks 1-7</p> <p>70 minute lesson weekly</p> <p>1 class from year 7 & 8</p> <p>Weeks 8-11</p> <p>Final individual interviews</p>
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Program Outline Designed and Delivered by DET Nurse and Participant Researcher (VIT registered secondary school teacher)	Curriculum connections
Week 1. Set up of research and pedagogical process Mapping/ Defining/ Process	English, Respectful relationship Education, HPE, Personal and social Capabilities, Media studies
Week 2 Discussing/Selecting/ ideas around intimate relationships/ Digital practices	English, Respectful relationship Education, HPE, Personal and Social Capabilities, Media studies
Week 3. Session on film making essentials and use of the iMovie, or WeVideo video editor for android users.	English, Critical and Creative thinking, Personal and Social Capabilities, Media studies
Week 4. Development of shooting script, Storyboard constructed. Active recording of video interviews and imagery for short film.	English, Respectful relationship Education, HPE, Personal and Social Capabilities, Critical and Creative thinking, Media studies
Week 5. Active recording of video interviews and imagery for short film.	English, Respectful relationship Education, HPE, Personal and Social Capabilities, Media studies, Critical and Creative thinking
Week 6. Active recording of video interviews and imagery for short film. Selecting, editing and creatively material to create final short film (under 5 minutes).	English, Respectful relationship Education, HPE, Personal and Social Capabilities, Media studies, critical and creative thinking

Week 7. Active recording of video interviews and imagery for short film. Selecting, editing and creatively material to create final short film (under 5 minutes).	English, Respectful relationship Education, HPE, General Capabilities, Media studies, Critical and creative thinking
Week 8-11 Final interviews (15 minutes per student) Participants reflect on the process and content.	English, Respectful relationship Education, HPE, General Capabilities, Media studies, Critical and creative thinking

Approval to conduct research at the school site was granted via a letter from the school Principal dated 18/2/16.

Appendix G Example 1 of Thematic Analysis

Code: 7Y7F

Transcription film from Olivia Year 7 2016 (1.43sec) Version 2/2

Hi I'm right here as if you don't know if you can't pronounce it
it's, it's with a .

I'll be talking about intimate relationship

um last night

two nights ago I was on Instagram had a request and usually if I

don't know that person I block them but at the start I felt like

I said to myself am I doing the right thing?

and then after I saw his photos and then I'm like I know him it's all

good

and then I told my brother and I showed him picture and he said

yeah I know him it's all good

he's um a good friend of mine he's from my rugby club

and after last night

He said hi and I said hi and we started talking

and this morning I said hi and he said hi and then I felt like normal

like I already knew him

and then we started talking

and then at rugby I said to hi to him

well he said hi to me and like we started talking.

Commented [LRE1]: Theme location

Commented [LRE2]: T: Behavioural practices
ST: Connections - Initiations

Commented [LRE3]:

Commented [LRE4R3]: Behavioural practices
ST: Personal rule
ST: Disconnective practices

Commented [LRE5]: Experience of intimacy /Forms of
intimacy--
ST: Emotional affect

Commented [LRE6]: Behavioural practices
ST: Personal Rules – Analysis

Commented [LRE7]: Behavioural practices
ST: Personal Rules analysis

Commented [LRE8]: Behavioural practice
ST: Personal Rules analysis/ checking in with a family/friend

Commented [LRE9]: Behavioural practices
ST: Personal rules analysis/approval

Commented [LRE10]: Behavioural practices
ST: Social conventions: Practices Talking as Intimacy

Commented [LRE11]: Location
ST Movement between digital and physical FTF

So we got along and yeah we're just friends and yeah and I felt like friends.

Like trust, hope and then um, um and then yeah at the end I thought it's all good

it's all normal so yeah

Thank you

Commented [LRE12]: Forms of intimacy/Emotional affect
ST: Feeling good, normal

Appendix H Example 2 of Thematic Analysis

Code: 11Y7F

Transcription Isabella Year 7 2016

Hi my name is [...] and I'm I would like to

I'm going to tell you a story what happened with me on social media

Commented [LRE1]: Theme Location
Subtheme Facebook

{So um this guy I didn't even know

um he added me on Facebook and um I added him back so

Commented [LRE2]: Behavioural practices
Subtheme – Social conventions

and then he asked me out for some reason I don't even know him

Commented [LRE3]: Behavioural practice
Subtheme social conventions connecting – accepting contact with unknown others

and um and then he started calling me names and stuff

Commented [LRE4]: Behavioural Practices
Subtheme – Abusive behaviour

and then I said no to him and then things happened between me

Commented [LRE5]: QUOTE

and him

Commented [LRE6]: Behavioural practices
Sub theme personal rules

And um and yeah

um there's this other guy on Facebook

Commented [LRE7]: Forms of intimacy
Subtheme multiple connections

he was one of my friend's best friends and he doesn't know me he

Commented [LRE8]: Location

so he sort of likes me but I don't like him back so I kind of like had a

break from him cause we were talking and talking to each other on

Commented [LRE9]: Behavioural practices
Personal rules

Facebook and um um he and his best friend which is my friend

Commented [LRE10]: Behavioural practices
Social conventions – talking as intimacy

asked me but but I said no cause it's kind of easy for a girl to say no

and um yeah

Commented [LRE11]: Behavioural practices
Sub theme Personal rules
AND Social conventions
Easy for girl Saying NO

so that was my story I didn't know what was going on so

Commented [LRE12]: QUOTE

I stayed off my friend for a while and yeah that's it thanks for

Commented [LRE13]: Behavioural practices
Subtheme – Personal rules

watching.